

## AFTERSHOCK FROM ASIA

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## THE BOOK THAT STUNNED THE LITERARY WORLD

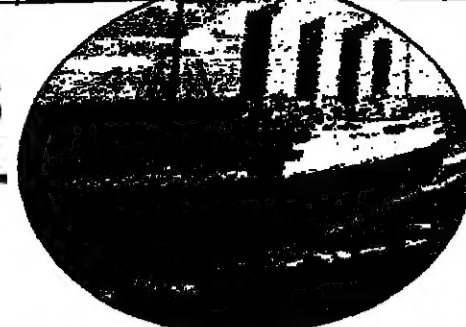
### IN MEMORY OF SYLVIA

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40-PAGE DOUBLE SECTION

Tapes tell of affair with woman, 21

# Clinton faces perjury and sex inquiry

By BRONWEN MADDOX  
IN WASHINGTON

A POTENTIALLY devastating investigation was launched yesterday into whether President Clinton urged a 24-year-old trainee to lie under oath in denying that she had an affair with him. If he were proved to have done so, the President could face impeachment proceedings.

Seventeen secret audiotapes of conversations between the trainee, Monica Lewinsky, and a White House aide have been handed to the independent counsel Kenneth Starr, who has broadened the scope of his long-running White-water investigation to include the allegation that the President encouraged the young woman to commit perjury.

His investigators had wired the White House aide Linda Tripp to record her conversations with Ms Lewinsky who spoke "graphically" about a year-and-a-half long affair with Mr Clinton starting when she was 21. In 20 hours of tape, she also talks about pressure earlier this month to testify falsely in the Paula Jones sexual harassment case.

Ms Lewinsky, who won one of the 250 places as a White House intern in 1995 and went on to work as a public relations assistant at the Pentagon, signed a sworn declaration on January 7 in which she is reported to say that she never had a sexual relationship with the President. Her lawyer said yesterday that she stood by that assertion.

Mr Clinton also denied having any "inappropriate relationship" with Ms Lewinsky.



Clinton: outraged denial of affair



Starr: three judges gave permission for inquiry

and said that he was outraged by the charges, which have emerged only days after he was forced to give sworn testimony in the Paula Jones case. Ms Lewinsky is due to be questioned by Mr Jones's attorneys later this week.

Lewinsky's lawyer said that she had already seen Mr Starr's investigators in Washington — although she had not been interviewed formally.

The most serious threat to Mr Clinton is the charge of incitement to commit perjury, rather than the allegations of a sexual relationship. Legal commentators said yesterday that Mr Starr might investigate whether to charge Ms Lewinsky with perjury to secure her co-operation in getting evidence against the President. The maximum sentence for the federal offence of perjury is five years' imprisonment.

Mr Starr is also investigating whether the President used his close friend and adviser Vernon Jordan as an intermediary to discuss Ms Lewinsky's testimony with her. Mr Jordan declined to comment on the allegations yesterday.

If it were proved that the President was instrumental in instructing a witness to lie to investigators, Congress would consider starting impeachment proceedings. Henry Hyde, the Republican House judiciary committee chairman, said last night: "Impeachment might very well be an option. Tampering with witnesses; obstructing justice are very serious charges."

The White House was insistent, however, that there was no truth in the allegations — which threaten to overshadow Mr Clinton's State of the Union address to Congress next Tuesday. His attorney, Robert Bennett, said: "The President adamantly denies it. I smell a rat."



Monica Lewinsky, now 24, was recorded claiming that she and the President were lovers for a year and a half

And Mike McMurry, the White House spokesman, said: "He's never had any improper relationship with this woman. He's made it clear from the beginning that he wants people to tell the truth in all matters. The President's statement speaks for itself."

new allegations would not deflect Mr Clinton from his work: "He is matter-of-fact and just keeps working on what he was elected to do. The American people expect him not to be distracted."

But he also said that the President's supporters outside the White House were trying to establish a new fund to meet his mounting legal costs, if that proved "ethical and legal".

Mr Starr was reported to have been nervous about expanding the investigation into an area that could discredit the rest of his investigation, which centres on alleged financial wrongdoing while Mr Clinton was Governor of Arkansas. Legal experts questioned Ms Tripp's motivation, and whether her use of microphones taped to her body constituted entrapment — enticing her to do or say something she would otherwise not have done.

## Tit-for-tat killing as IRA rejects talks

By MARTIN FLETCHER  
CHIEF IRELAND CORRESPONDENT

NORTHERN Ireland's fragile peace process was rocked again last night when the IRA leadership declared the talks in crisis and the vicious new spiral of tit-for-tat killings claimed yet another Catholic victim.

The IRA leadership issued a statement rejecting the British and Irish Governments' new blueprint for Northern Ireland's future, calling it "a pro-Unionist document" that offered no basis for a lasting settlement and had created "a crisis in the peace process".

The republican terrorist group accused the Government of re-militarisation and stalling on confidence-building and said yet another Prime Minister — Tony Blair — had bowed to the "Orange card".

The IRA's political wing, Sinn Féin, had already rejected the document, though it was staying in the talks, but this new statement called the continuation of the six-month-old IRA ceasefire into doubt.

The statement was seen in some quarters as a republican ploy to increase Sinn Féin's leverage before the peace talks move to London on Monday and enter their most crucial stage. Andrew Mackay, the Shadow Northern Ireland Secretary, said the blueprint enjoyed wide support and "further negotiation must be through the talks process and not at the end of a gun".

As the statement was being transmitted to the BBC shortly after 5pm the IRA ceasefire was further strained by the shooting of a 35-year-old Catholic man in the loyalist Donegal Road area near Belfast's city centre. He was taken to hospital but died almost immediately. The gunman escaped on foot. The most likely culprits were the Loyalist Volunteer Force.

## Allason's libel action fails

Rupert Allason, the spy writer and former Tory MP, who sued the makers of the television satire *Have I Got News For You*, is facing a £50,000 legal bill after he lost the action. During the trial, lawyers for BBC Worldwide suggested that Mr Allason treated libel actions as a hobby. **Page 5**

## Thinking big

A couple have built their own home in East Sussex. Nothing unusual in that, except that this one has a dungeon, a minstrel's gallery and a drawbridge. **Page 3**

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## Judges move to restore confidence in sentencing

By FRANCES GIBBS, LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

JUDGES are to spell out for the first time how long criminals must serve in jail under an initiative today to restore confidence in the criminal justice system.

The Lord Chief Justice will tell all judges, by means of a statement delivered in court and on the Internet, that from now on they must explain what their jail sentences mean in practice.

Lord Bingham of Cornhill will say that judges must state "in open court as clearly and accurately as possible" how long an offender must spend in custody; how long after release a prisoner will be subject to supervision; and how long after release a former inmate will be liable to recall to prison.

At present, judges simply state the jail term without explaining that the defendant will usually be released well before the end of the sentence. As a consequence, judges often come under fire for being

"soft" on sentencing when offenders are released. From now on, judges will make clear that an offender sentenced to four years, for example, serves two years in custody. The rest is suspended and the offender conditionally released. But if he or she reoffends, he can be recalled to

serve the rest of the sentence plus any new penalty.

With more serious offences (four years or more) or discretionary life sentences, an offender is not considered by the Parole Board until half the time has been served in custody; and not usually released until two thirds of the sentence is served. The rest of the sentence is suspended, but the offender may be recalled if he reoffends.

The move, which has the backing of the Government, is aimed at ending public confusion over sentencing. Judges and ministers also hope it will boost support for the justice system after Home Office research found widespread misconceptions about sentences that were undermining public confidence. Jack Straw, the Home Secretary, welcomed Lord Bingham's announcement which, he said, was in line with government policy to make sentences easier to understand.



"Not twelve! Not eleven! No, we've knocked it down to an incredible ten years!"

## Beckett's flat costs £100,000 to service

By JILL SHERMAN, CHIEF POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

MARGARET BECKETT last night came under fire from the Tories for service bills of nearly £100,000 on her "grace and favour" one-bedroom flat in Admiralty House. The charges, set by the Cabinet Office, are in addition to the £65,000 she spent on renovating it last year.

The President of the Board of Trade disclosed that the annual service charge payable on Flat 1, Admiralty House in Whitehall for 1997-98 was £84,166.80 plus £14,729.14 in value-added tax.

An "amazed" John Redwood, shadow Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, said: "Most people would expect to buy a house or flat for the annual charge for Margaret Beckett's heating, lighting and cleaning. The Government should start getting its priorities right. This is money which could be spent on hospitals, not ministers' accommodation."

The row comes after a storm over the £650,000 estimated cost of refurbishing the parliamentary residence of the Lord Chancellor, Lord Irvine of Lairg.

The Department of Trade and Industry said last night that Mrs Beckett's service charges were set by the Cabinet Office. They included gas, electricity, utilities, central heating, guarding and security, maintenance of common parts and external decoration.

It was pointed out that her flat was in a 300-year-old building where other Cabinet Ministers, including John Prescott and George Robertson, also had accommodation. Mrs Beckett's flat had not been used for three years, but was once occupied by Sir Leon Brittan, now an EC Commissioner. Michael Portillo and Malcolm Rifkind also had flats in Admiralty House when Cabinet Ministers.

Mrs Beckett is the first President of the Board of Trade for two decades to have an official residence.

## Phoney Hague fails to entrap wary Blair

By DAMIAN WHITWORTH

WHEN the flat Yorkshire monotone said "Indulge Tony", Mr Blair knew he had both a hoaxer and an opportunity. An impersonator managed to trick his way past the switchboard of Number 10 yesterday but as soon as he talked to the Prime Minister he gave the game away. For while Mr Blair has invited William Hague to "call me Tony", the leader of the Opposition always addresses him formally.

Realising the conversation might be recorded for broadcast, Mr Blair played along good naturedly. It would give him an amusing story with which to regale a surprised Commons. The prankster was Steve Penk, a DJ with London's Capital Radio who has built a reputation for impersonating famous voices. After obtaining the number of the Cabinet Office from directory inquiries, Penk asked the operator there to be put through to Mr Blair. He then successfully negotiated the Prime Minister's secretary, who told him that Cherie had gone to find her husband.

In a moment of delicious irony she said: "Oh you didn't sound like yourself," but added: "I'm sorry, we do get a lot of imposters you see."

"Oh well, I can well imagine we get quite a few of the same at our office," said Penk, to which the secretary replied: "You're better now, you sound normal now, hold on..." And the Prime Minister was put on: Blair: "Hello."

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# Brown and Blair ham it up for Question Time

Have you seen that television advertisement for a small car, whose message is that in dangerous situations we make ourselves small? Children are shown instinctively shielding themselves, crouching and clenching the whole body, hugging arms across chest for protection.

If Gordon Brown's body language at Prime Minister's Questions yesterday had been an amateur performance by an actor in a village-hall whodunnit, playing a Chancellor of the Exchequer driven to the verge of homicide by suspicion of his Prime Minister, then the theatricality would have made you wince. He would have been humming.

Mr Brown sat with Tony Blair to

his right. Mr Blair looked relaxed in the "imperial" haircut first modelled by Sir Derek Jacobi in the role of *I Claudius*. But Brown had drawn his left shoulder away as though shrinking from a nameless horror. His right arm was swung diagonally across the chest, gripping his left shoulder. His bent knees were pressed tightly together, like the mummified child victim of a human sacrifice. Even his head tilted slightly away, in a sort of frozen jerk.

Only once did he really smile, and this was at a joke of William Hague's. The Opposition leader referred to the PM's opening admission that he had just taken a telephone call from a hoaxer pretending to be Mr Hague and



POLITICAL SKETCH

wanting a friendly chat. A better hoax, said Hague, would have been to persuade No 10 that Gordon Brown wanted a friendly chat.

The Chancellor enjoyed that. He grinned, then returned to a tense impassivity that offered no clue as to what he thought — or whether he was even listening. If not, he missed nothing. This sketch remains unsure whether Tony Blair's wonderful ability to avoid answering any question at all is clever — or too clever.

Hague had two simple questions and he put them simply: what did Harriet Harman mean by the "affluence test" she had proposed? And when was the Government due to deliver its promised Green Paper on welfare reform?

Grimacing and shaking his head, the Prime Minister threw almost everything at his opposite number but an answer. He told Hague that "I got better questions from the hoax caller", he told Hague why it was important to reform the welfare

state; he accused Hague of trying "to make a few sort of sixth form debating points"; and he told Hague the last Government was to blame anyway.

When Paddy Ashdown asked why Blair would not join his own "patriotic alliance" and consider an early referendum on the principle of joining the European single currency, Mr Blair took avoiding action. "Answer the question," begged Ashdown, in vain. When Sir Geoffrey Johnson Smith (C. Walsden) asked for a guarantee on pensions, he got no answer.

Desmond Swayne (C. New Forest West) received no reply to his question, "Who is affluent?" (apart from a heckle of "You!") and a crisp

request from Edward Garnier (C. Harborough) for a threshold figure for "affluence" met the same babbling uncommunicativeness as a query from Philip Hammond (C. Runnymede & Weybridge) on the minimum wage.

Mr Hammond had risen just before 3.30, when the session ends. Hoping to get in if there was time bobbing up and down — was that scourge of Labour's devolutionary plans, Tam Dalyell (Lab. Lirlin-gow). But Mr Blair's answer to Hammond went on and on: "... that's an incomplete view and it's an out of date view and it's the wrong view...".

Was he filibustering? Dalyell never did get an answer.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Killer gets legal aid to sue over treatment

A convicted child killer and armed robber has been given legal aid while in jail to sue the Home Office over his prison treatment officials confirmed yesterday. Adolphus Wickham, 30, is claiming psychological damage and breach of duty after he was put in a punishment cell. Two weeks ago during hearings in Birmingham he tried to escape and was recaptured. The Legal Aid Board said the case so far has cost £2,600. A spokeswoman said prisoners were entitled to legal aid if they satisfied certain tests. Wickham had been supported by counsel and there was an 80 per cent chance of success. If he wins the Home Office will have to pay costs.

### Meningitis death

Health officials are trying to reassure parents after the second pupil at a school on Merseyside died of meningitis. Kelly King, 15, a student at Notre Dame High School, in Everton Valley, Liverpool, died from the meningococcal form of the disease three weeks after the death of fellow pupil Michelle Fleming, 14.

### Cook's tour

Nearly £160,000 was spent on the seven-day world tour by Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary. In a Commons written reply, Mr Cook said that his journey to China and Hong Kong alone cost an estimated £100,000. A Foreign Office spokesman indicated this included travel expenses of his officials.

### Judge loses case

An appeal court judge has lost an action for unfair dismissal brought against him by a stable groom he sacked after she became pregnant. Sir John Chadwick represented himself and his wife, Diana, at the hearing. They were ordered to pay their former groom, Nicola Macleod, nearly £500 compensation.

### Vicar murdered

The vicar in charge of All Saints Anglican Episcopal Church in Milan was yesterday found murdered at his home. Police said that they "could not exclude" the possibility that the Rev Gregory Behegyi, a 50-year-old American bachelor, was the latest victim in a series of homosexual murders.

### Chauffeur jailed

A banned drink-driver who lied to become chauffeur to the chairman of the Centrica gas company was jailed for six weeks and banned for three years by magistrates in Bracknell, Berkshire. Richard Hughes, 44, admitted driving while banned, without insurance and after drinking excess alcohol.

### Diana concert

A celebrity concert performed by some of Diana, Princess of Wales's favourite stars is to be staged this summer for her memorial fund in the grounds of Althorp Park where she is buried. Some performers might appear by television satellite link to the open-air event, which is expected to raise more than £1 million.

### Editor goes

Bridget Rowe, editor of the *Sunday Mirror*, left the Mirror Group abruptly yesterday, triggering a reshuffling of tabloid editorships. Ms Rowe, who published the photograph of the kiss between Diana, Princess of Wales, and Dodi Fayed, stood down days after Kelvin MacKenzie took over as deputy chief executive.

### Lone parents up

The number of single parent families in Britain increased by 27 per cent in the five years from 1990 to 1995, according to the Office for National Statistics. There were 1.56 million one-parent families in 1995. The figures show that 2.7 million, or one in five children lived in single-parent households in 1995.

## Prescott acts to curb profits of privatised rail

By NICHOLAS WATT AND CHRISTINE BUCKLEY

JOHN PRESCOTT stepped up Labour's assault on rail privatisation yesterday when he announced a wide-ranging inquiry into the newly created rolling stock companies that lease trains to the rail operators.

Condemning the "huge profits" made by the three companies, the Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions said he had asked the Rail Regulator to examine whether the leasing market needed stronger controls.

In one of his most significant statements about Britain's rail network since the election, Mr Prescott announced the setting up of a new national rail authority that will take over the powers of the franchise director, who awards contracts for the privatised rail network.

Under Mr Prescott's plans, which will be outlined in a White Paper in the spring, regular train users will be represented on the new authority to put forward the views of ordinary travellers. Companies hoping to take over a rail network may also have to face public hearings in which rail passengers would question directors on their



Prescott: to set up new rail authority

plans. Mr Prescott, who campaigned strongly against rail privatisation when it was introduced by the Tories, concentrated most of his fire yesterday on the three rolling stock companies.

During an appearance before the Commons transport sub-committee Mr Prescott said he had written to John Swift, the Rail Regulator, to ask him to undertake a "thorough and fundamental examination" of the operation of Porterbrook Leasing, Ever-sholt Train Leasing and Angel Trains. Mr Swift is to report

by April. He told the committee: "Many critics have objected to the way the rolling stock leasing companies were sold — a virtual monopoly of BR's rolling stock at a knock-down price, leaving a few individuals with huge profits. The original purchasers, when they sold their holdings, made profits of over £700 million."

The Deputy Prime Minister complained that the rolling stock companies had been set up with virtually no controls because they were neither licensed nor regulated by the Rail Regulator. He added: "They must not get rich again at the taxpayers' expense. We have every right to demand the best and be absolutely sure the public gets value for money from an industry that is underpinned by the near £2 billion a year we provide to subsidise the railways."

In his letter to Mr Swift the Mr Prescott said: "I would like to have your assessment of the scope for the rolling stock companies to abuse their market power either through excessive pricing, inadequate investment in new or refurbished rolling stock, or more generally through their response to the requirements of train operating companies to secure improvements in performance."

## £142m lost to jobs benefits fraudsters

By POLLY NEWTON

FRAUDSTERS claimed £142 million in unemployment benefit last year. Some £86 million was paid to people who lied about their circumstances and £56 million went to claimants who fraudulently cashed Giro cheques or used benefit books, often by pretending to be someone else.

The figures, in a National Audit Office report published today, provide powerful ammunition for the Government in its battle to reform the welfare system.

The public spending watchdog carries out an annual investigation into the National Insurance Fund Account, which pays pensions, incapacity benefit, widow's benefit and unemployment benefit.

Sir John Bourn, head of the NAO, has refused to approve the account because of the level of benefit fraud. It is the 11th consecutive year that the account has failed to meet NAO standards.

Sir John says there were also significant errors made by staff in assessing benefit. Of £587 million paid out in unemployment benefit, £38.3 million was calculated incorrectly. Overpayments amounted to £20.6 million and underpayments to £17.7 million, a net loss to the National Insurance Fund Account of £2.9 million. Sir John also reports a shortfall in national insurance payments.



Where but a Jean-Paul Gaultier show would a man-hair-dad harpiscordist play *My Way*? (Grace Bradberry writes).

Yesterday the time belonged not only to Gaultier, showing his second haute-couture collection, but also to Yves Saint Laurent, who is celebrating 40 years at the top

## Dresses for men

of the fashion pyramid. Saint Laurent put women in trouser suits, now Gaultier is revolutionising women's dress again — and making a

few changes to the men too. He has introduced haute couture for men, and the campiest model Gaultier could find flounced before photographers in a black taffeta redingote that was a dress in all but name.

The women wore fabulous sculptural evening dresses and avant-garde tailoring.

## MPs and peers fight green-belt housing

By JAMES LANDALE, POLITICAL REPORTER

MPs and peers yesterday joined forces to campaign against the Government's plans to build millions of new homes in so-called "green belt" sites across the country over the next 20 years.

The plans were called an "absolute disgrace" by Tim Yeo, the Shadow Environment spokesman, as the deadline ran out for John Prescott, the Deputy Prime Minister, to call in the plans for 2,500 new houses north of Newcastle upon Tyne. Mr Yeo was joining an all-party group of 60 MPs and peers to launch a campaign to fight the Government's forecast of 4.4 million new homes in the countryside and urban areas by 2016.

The MPs said that the Government was sending the wrong signal to builders and property developers. Instead

of building on greenfield sites, they should be concentrating on redeveloping "brownfield" sites within towns and cities.

The Council for the Protection of Rural England believes the planned new homes will cover around 650 square miles of rural land in England and 300 square miles in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Ministers say the huge increase in demand for house-holds comes as a result of rising divorce rates and longer lifespans. The Government is due to publish detailed proposals in the next few months and officials say the aim is to ensure homes are built close to public transport links. The Environment, Transport and Regional Affairs Committee began an inquiry into the issue yesterday.

Jim Cousins, Labour MP for

Newcastle upon Tyne Central, said that 4,000 homes in his constituency — which covers most of the city's West End — were currently boarded up or empty. The development, he said, would accelerate the decline of inner-city areas such as his own. He said new homes could be built on brownfield sites.

But a spokesman for the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions said that 76 per cent of Newcastle's housing requirement of 10,750 homes would be provided by existing built-up areas.

Lord Rodgers of Quarry Bank, the Labour peer and leading architect, urged everyone to work towards improving city life and "filling the holes" to halt expansion into the countryside.

## Questions are 'better in hoax calls'

Continued from page 1

perhaps I can let you have it in the Commons today." Mr Blair replied: "I think it would be very helpful, just hand it over at Prime Minister's Question Time. It will be a better exchange than usual."

The call then ended, though it was uncertain who pulled the plug. Mr Blair's official spokesman said the Prime Minister was a "bit peeved" when the call ended. "He was thoroughly enjoying the conversation and didn't want to be a spoil sport. It brightened up his morning."

He explained that no hoaxer had previously managed to get through to the Prime Minister, though on one occasion the switchboard had told him the Chancellor was on the line: "Hello, Gordon, and it was Chancellor Kohl on the line."

The risk of impersonators taking off world leaders is reduced by the use of a verification call-back system but such a procedure is not used when Mr Hague calls.

Later in the Commons Mr Blair referred to the jape during Question Time. In a clash with Mr Hague over social security reform, Mr Blair said he had been asked better questions and shorter ones by the hoax caller.

Manchester-born Penk, 35, who began his career on hospital radio as a teenager before joining Capital Radio 12 months ago, said the chat with the Prime Minister had been his greatest prank yet. "I'm shell-shocked by it all... but I think I've blown my chances of a knighthood for services to radio."

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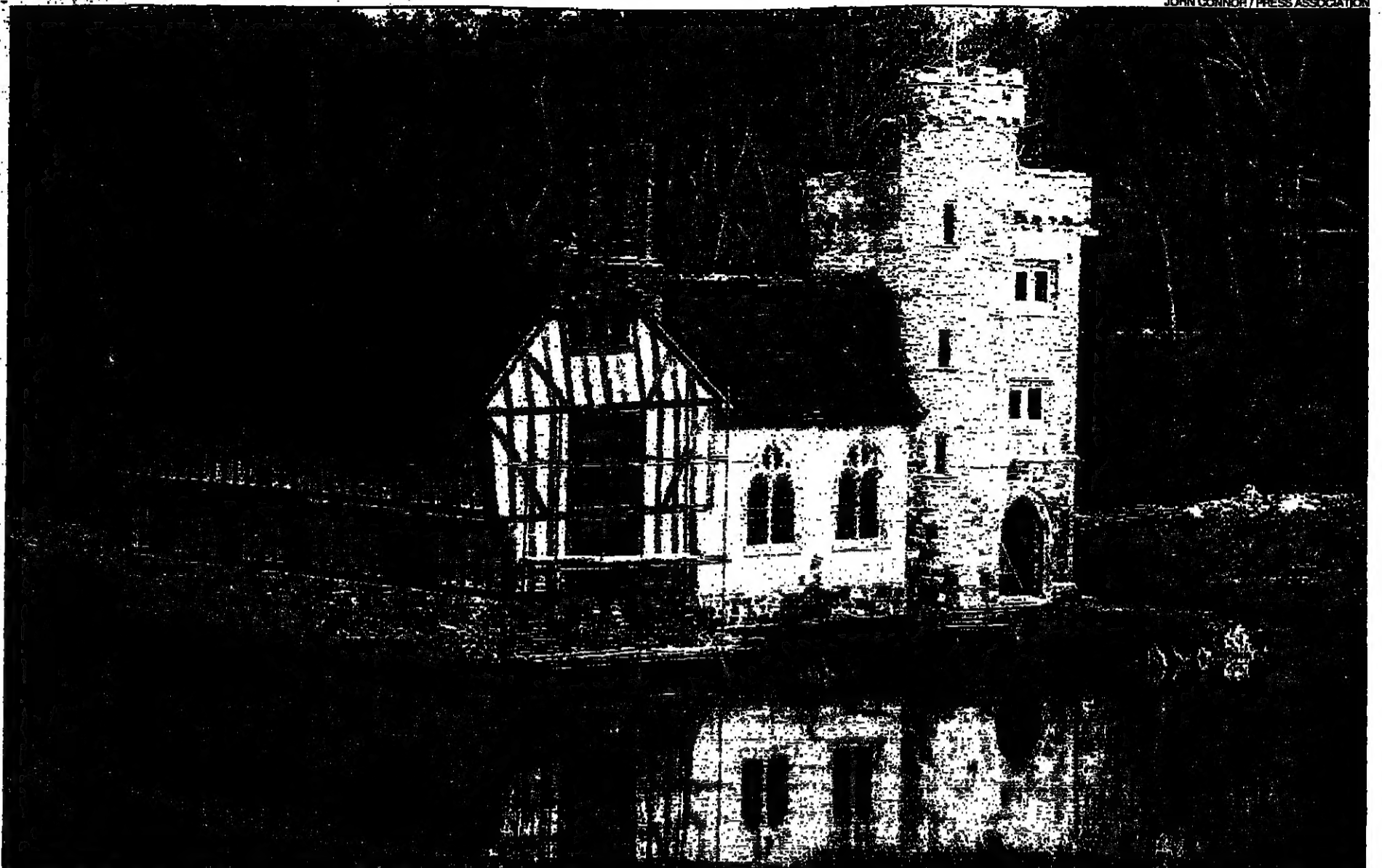
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# Couple make history building £1m castle



John and Jo Mew at Braylsham Castle, which was inspired by the moated manor houses of Sussex and Kent: a drawbridge offers the only contact with the mainland and some walls have been created authentically top-sided

For some people DIY is making a shelf, two enthusiasts went further, says Robin Young

A COUPLE inspired by their love of ancient buildings have built themselves a reproduction castle, which could be worth £1 million.

John Mew, an orthodontist, and his wife, Jo, of Mayfield, East Sussex, spent five and a half years constructing their new home, Braylsham Castle, which faithfully replicates the style of moated manor houses in Sussex and Kent.

Mr Mew, who had previously restored an old house and added a period wing to his present home, estimates that he and his wife spent about £330,000 on the castle, "not allowing for the countless hours of labour".

Among the "period" features are a dungeon, a minstrel's gallery, secret passageways between rooms, and a drawbridge linking the building to the mainland.

The great hall is a miniature version of Westminster Hall, with a hammerbeam roof.

Mr Mew said yesterday: "Some people may think I'm an eccentric old fool, but I'm a doer with ideas. I'm sure people thought the castle would never materialise, but it has and I am thrilled with it."

Mr Mew added: "In some ways it is just a six-bedroom house with no neighbours for miles, but in another way it is a romantic castle with everything you would expect of a historic home."

The couple had to dam a river and clear a valley before they could even start building work. It took two years to move 12,000 tonnes of earth.

He said: "We were influenced in our choice of site by Leeds Castle and the style of the building is taken from Scotney Castle, Ightham Mote and Hever, all of which have similar histories."

The original halls were open structures with a central fireplace and no chimney, but just a hole in the roof. Then in the 13th century they built stone keeps with a spiral staircase as the only means of access to upstairs accommodation. In the 16th century



Beams were made from reclaimed wood

they added timber-frame accommodation blocks to provide more space and comfort."

After jotting down some rough sketches more than six years ago, Mr Mew completed his designs for the castle with help from an architect, Stephen Langer, who also produced drawings to planning application standards.

Before they could start the Mews had to overcome local planners' vehement objections that they were proposing to build in an area of outstanding natural beauty where no building had ever stood.

They accomplished that by commissioning an artist's impression of the proposed castle from a local artist, George Hawkins. Mr Mew said: "He did such a beautiful picture that the planning committee members fell in love with it and overruled their officers' objections."

Mrs Mew bought her husband a secondhand bulldozer tractor as a birthday present, to help him with the clearing. She said: "I was the gofer and general assistant, though I can do plastering or man a cement mixer."

The mixture of features spanning hundreds of years stretched Mr Mew's abilities as a craftsman. He said: "I consider myself not a bad carpenter, but this project certainly tested me. I learnt

lots of ancient skills which were wholly new to me, such as making stained glass windows and carving in stone. I made my own cherubs and lions to decorate the wall."

He and his wife also made all 80 of the stone steps in the keep's spiral staircase.

He said: "I was quoted a price of £300 for each step, so it would have been an enormous bill. So I made my own by making a mould."

When even Mr Mew's resourcefulness was stretched so far, the couple hired expert help, and hunted for parts of demolished churches and oak beams in builders' yards for their great hall.

The castle has its own spring and electricity generator, making the building self-sufficient. The timber-frame section, constructed with timber from oak trees felled in the 1987 storm, has even been created top-sided, with one end a foot lower than the other and on one corner the wall leans out over the water.

"You cannot believe how unimaginative people are," Mr Mew said yesterday. "Everybody knows that a top-sided building looks more quaint and charming, but if you want to build one they think you must be mad."

Mr and Mrs Mew are now preparing to move into their new home from a mill, which they intend to let.

Mr Mew said yesterday: "We are certainly trying to keep the interior in a period style, but it is not easy to get an antique computer."

Standing at the top of the tower of Braylsham Castle, Mr Mew said yesterday that his labour of love had been inspired by his interest in old buildings — and why they are thought more beautiful and exciting to live in than new ones.

"Why is it that a castle set on an island in the countryside has such an appealing image?" he mused. "Building the castle was in many ways an experiment in finding the answer to that question."

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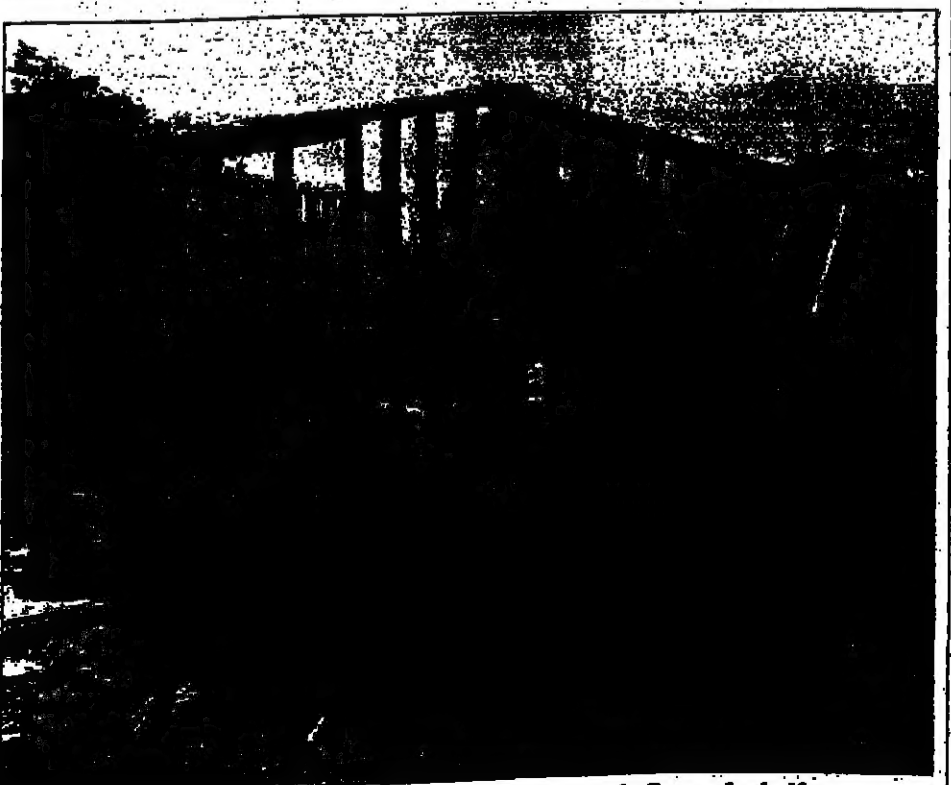
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january 30



The castle under construction: work took the couple five and a half years



# Fertility clinics to review rules after birth to oldest mother

BY IAN MURRAY, STEPHEN FARRELL AND SIMON DE BRUXELLES

RULES controlling test-tube baby treatments are to be reviewed urgently after reports that the oldest woman in Britain to have a baby received fertility treatment secretly.

Elizabeth Buttle, 60, who claimed to have conceived her son, Joseph, naturally with her married lover, was said to have tricked doctors at the London Gynaecology and Fertility Centre in Harley Street by posing as a widow of 49. She allegedly gave her name as Tracy Ann Williams on several occasions when she visited the clinic, after telling her family she was going to London for treatment for a throat ailment.

The Government fertility watchdog, which drew up the code of practice covering the subject, said: "We are examining the situation very closely. We will be seeking clarification from the clinic and looking at the records of the case during the annual inspection carried out as part of the licensing process."

"As far as we can tell no law has been broken yet, but we are seeking clarification and looking at the code of practice



Susan Bates: proof of age had not been sought

to see if the criteria are clear enough."

Mrs Buttle, from Cwmaman, Dyfed, is understood to have paid between £5,000 and £10,000 for her in-vitro fertilisation treatment using donor eggs. Last week she signed a £120,000 deal with the News of the World, insisting: "I've never taken fertility drugs or any hormone replacement therapy. It's just malicious gossip."

However, the fertility spe-

cialist who runs the clinic, the only one in Britain to treat women up to the age of 55, said last night that he saw no need to change the rules. "We don't want any more policing of fertility treatments," said Ian Craft.

"There is too much of it already. We don't want any knee-jerk reactions that will wreck the chances of older people having babies which they are perfectly capable of bringing up in a loving environment."

Professor Craft said women of 70 could give birth to a normal child after fertility treatment. "We have to draw the line somewhere, and at my clinic we have chosen 55 because that is the age of the oldest natural conception in Britain. There is no reason to disapprove older women or discourage them from having children. Those who come to us are interviewed in great depth by two independent counsellors who draw up very detailed reports about them."

"The counsellors would not recommend that anyone should be allowed to become a mother if they did not think she was capable and that the



Elizabeth Buttle, 60, with her son Joseph — she is said to have visited a fertility clinic and given her age as 49

child would grow up in a good environment. We have acted honourably and professionally and there are a lot of happy older women out there who can testify to that. All this fuss gives a sense of something being done unprofessionally, when in fact we are a very professional organisation indeed."

Professor Craft, who was

responsible for Britain's first births from egg donors, refused to discuss his part in the conception. He said: "Don't hold a grudge, but I'm going to make no comment." He added: "I'm only human and deserve to be treated with dignity. I don't want my family dragged through the dirt."

Later, as he drove his tractor around the farm at Llanguyl, he grinned broadly and produced a sheet of paper with the word "No" written on it when approached by reporters.

Locals said yesterday that Mrs

Buttle had told the businessman that he was the natural father of her baby. Both had travelled to the registrar's office in Carmarthen, Dyfed, to sign Joseph's birth certificate as the baby's parents.

Mrs Buttle signed in the section stating: "I certify that the parties entered above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief."

The Office of National Statistics, in charge of registrars' offices for birth certificates, said she could face legal action. A spokesman

said: "If it is a case that someone deliberately misled the registrar as to the circumstances of the birth then that would raise the issue of perjury."

Fathers of children born through IVF or artificial insemination are allowed to sign the certificate. Other women of Mrs Buttle's age who have had a successful fertility treatment have had a fertilised egg implanted in their womb, but Mrs Buttle is believed to have visited the clinic alone, which would make it almost impossible for Mr Rawstron to be the father.

## IN BRIEF

### Life for sex killer who re-enacted porn video

A private investigator, who raped and strangled a mature college student, was jailed for life at Manchester Crown Court yesterday for murder. Stuart Hulce, 37, of Lowton, near Wigan, a former soldier who had been watching a video portraying graphic scenes of sadomasochism and bondage, spotted his victim by chance on his way home as she put out the milk. He subjected Shirley Brown, 46, to a macabre re-enactment of the video before strangling her with her own tights in June 1996. Mrs Brown's body was discovered by her young son, Richard.

### Beef ban delay

European veterinary experts adjourned talks in Brussels yesterday without agreeing to relax the British beef export ban. They set up a working group to study the EU Commission's recommendation to lift the ban in areas where herds are certified BSE-free.

### Boys accused

Four 11-year-old boys and one aged 14 were accused at Manchester Youth Court of sexually assaulting a 14-year-old girl. The attacks happened at 5.30pm on January 12 in the Beswick area. Three, including the older boy, were also charged with attempted rape.

### 'Holiday' tax

The doubling of airport departure tax has increased the price of package holidays, according to the Civil Aviation Authority. It says the average cost of winter holidays, at £434.13 per cent higher than last year, shows the tax is being passed on to the customer.

### Transplants plea

American scientists involved in pig-to-human transplants, led by Fritz Bach of Harvard Medical School, have called for a moratorium until the possible dangers are more clearly understood and there has been a full public discussion.

### Dome signing

The man who devised the Spitting Image puppet show and the BBC's latest corporate identity has been hired for £50,000 to create a logo for the Millennium Dome in Greenwich, southeast London. Martin Lambie-Nairn was chosen from a shortlist of three.

### Ecstasy guards

Two guardsmen at Buckingham Palace, Privates Matthew Diggle and Russell Thomas of the Royal Regiment of Wales, will be sentenced tomorrow for supplying Ecstasy to another Palace guardsman, Private Gareth Holland, 20, who later collapsed and died.

### Bigger flock

The list of British birds — those seen in the wild in Britain and Ireland — has risen to 551. The newcomers are: red-head (a duck); American coot; black-faced bunting; cedar waxwing; and three warblers: bay-breasted, Hume's leaf and eastern Bonelli's.

# Have I bill for

Have I bill for... (text partially obscured)

Judge gr... Clark ban... spoof di...

Have I bill for... (text partially obscured)

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## Guard dog keeps press pack at bay outside safe house

Simon de Bruxelles reports from a remote Welsh farm on the mother of all stories

A LARGE black dog stood guard outside the remote Welsh farmhouse where Britain's oldest mother was holed up with her "minders" from a Sunday newspaper yesterday. Having sold her story to the News of the World for £120,000, 60-year-old Liz Buttle was exposed yesterday as a fraud who had lied about her age in order to receive fertility treatment from a Harley Street clinic.

Mrs Buttle was staying yesterday with her daughter Belinda, 41, son Joseph, two months, and two journalists from the paper at a farm at Llanilwael, six miles south of

Lampeter. A reporter dressed in Wellington boots and camouflage trousers said he had been staying in the ramshackle house since Friday, and looked it. He picked his way past the dog, several tin baths full of rain water and baby clothes, a decaying caravan and other debris heaped up outside the door to tell visitors that Mrs Buttle would not be granting interviews.

Inside, Mrs Buttle was explaining why she had told the paper that the baby had been conceived natu-

rally when in fact she had been receiving fertility treatment. The News of the World was yesterday considering whether the deceit amounted to breach of contract and justified the withholding of all or part of Mrs Buttle's fee.

Equally enigmatic was Peter Rawstron, Mrs Buttle's former lover, believed to have been the father of the child. Mr Rawstron, 58, back with his estranged wife Vera at their farm five miles from Mrs Buttle's home in Cwmaman,

refused to discuss his part in the conception. He said: "Don't hold a grudge, but I'm going to make no comment." He added: "I'm only human and deserve to be treated with dignity. I don't want my family dragged through the dirt."

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## Liposuction left woman 'like Michelin man'

BY PAUL WILKINSON

A WOMAN who said she was left looking like a "Michelin Man" after two cosmetic operations to have fat removed from her hips has won damages of £20,000 from a private clinic.

Eda Watson, 53, used savings of £6,000 to pay for the first operation in 1993 at the clinic run by the Transform Medical Group, but it was a failure. A second operation at the same clinic near her home in Sheffield left her disfigured. On each occasion she had come out of the anaesthetic as the painful process of sucking fat from her hips was going on.

Mrs Watson, a mother of two, received the damages in an out-of-court settlement after suing the clinic and the surgeon, Dr Thomas Norton, for negligence and breach of contract. She later discovered that Dr Norton, who is no longer at the clinic, was not a qualified plastic surgeon and that in 1984 he was jailed for nine months for obtaining morphine illegally. He also had a conviction for wounding after "smashing a glass in a man's face."

Nigel Curry, company secretary for Transform Medical Group, which runs 20 clinics in Britain, said the company was not aware of the doctor's

criminal convictions. "This is an isolated case and is not a typical result. We have carried out hundreds of thousands of these operations successfully."

Yesterday Mrs Watson told how she had turned to liposuction after dieting had failed to remove the fat from her hips. "It turned out to be the most horrendous experience of my life," she said.

"It was expensive, but I thought it was a tried and tested method and was perfectly safe. In September 1993, I awoke while the process was going on. I was aware of rods being pushed into my body and the pain was terrible."

"Afterwards I realised the operation had been a disaster. My hips were bulging and wavy, just like the Michelin Man. The clinic agreed to a corrective operation in May 1994, and I said I would only go through with it if they assured me there would be no repetition of me waking in surgery."

"It was the same doctor, and to my horror I went through the same thing again, coming round during the process and feeling great pain and distress. Worse still, when it was all over my hips were exactly the same and they remain disfigured to this day."



Eda Watson: she won damages of £20,000

## Steamroller victim squashed but alive

BY BILL HOFFMANN

A CONSTRUCTION worker who was run over from head to toe by a steamroller is expected to survive, despite severe leg injuries and several broken bones.

The man, aged 26, was last night described as "alert, but in substantial pain" in the intensive care unit at Royal London Hospital after the accident on Tuesday. He was pressed face down into a mixture of sand and gravel on a building site at Heathrow airport when the steam-

roller operator reversed, failing to notice him.

The victim was chatting to a fellow worker when the steamroller reversed, trapping his foot so that he was unable to move clear.

Emergency workers carefully extricated the man, who was airlifted to hospital. A spokesman for the Southern Yacht said: "He's very lucky. It's a miracle, really. It appears that what saved him was the fact the ground is a soft mixture of gravel and sand."

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# Have I got a £50,000 bill for you, Allason

BY PETER FOSTER

RUPERT ALLASON, the spy writer and litigious former Tory MP who sued the makers of the television satire *Have I Got News For You* for calling him a "convincing little shit" was facing a £50,000 legal bill yesterday after he lost his libel action.

Despite calling his elderly mother to give evidence about the distress the remark had caused, Mr Allason, who represented himself throughout the three-day trial, was unable to convince a jury that the words were defamatory.

During the trial, lawyers for BBC Worldwide, publishers of *Have I Got News For You*, the book in which the remark was made, and co-defendants with Hat Trick Productions, suggested that Mr Allason treated libel actions as a hobby and was interested only in making easy money.

After three hours of deliberation the jury of six men and six women found against Mr Allason, who remained impassive as the verdict was read out. The former MP, who is

## ACTION MAN

The former MP's defeat was only his second in 24 libel actions. Mr Allason, who has "settled" several cases out of court, has never disclosed the amount of his "winning". But they can be hundreds of thousands of pounds. Perhaps his most famous case

estimated to have made a small fortune from the spy books he writes under the pseudonym Nigel West, did not comment on his defeat and slipped out of the High Court via a side exit.

His mother Nuala, 77, and friend Jane Burgess, a violinist, left via a separate exit. Ms Burgess said: "If that was justice, I would like to know what the definition of justice is."

In his evidence, Mr Allason, an accomplished amateur advocate, described the remarks as a "vicious libel" and a "revolting slur". He said there was "nothing fun" about libel

and made an impassioned plea to the jury not to let the media get away with it. "Where I believe the media has been guilty of misconduct, I feel I have a responsibility to step in."

The defence, led by Charles Gray, QC, argued that the remarks were in a long British tradition of poking fun at people in authority. "Think before you make an award which thrones programmes like *Have I Got News for You*," Mr Gray said.

Colin Swash, the series producer and author of the remark, stood by his material under cross-examination from

Mr Allason who, he said, should have taken the joke. "David Mellor was called a sex-mad buffoon, but I'd expect him to shrug, say something nasty about us, and then get on with life," he said.

Mr Gray argued that the phrase "convincing little shit" was also fair comment given Mr Allason's opposition to the Maastricht treaty and his behaviour when he refused to support the Government in a confidence vote on the issue.

Jimmy Mulville, managing director of Hat Trick Productions, which makes *Have I Got News For You* for the BBC, was delighted at the result. "Mr Allason is obviously very skilled at bringing this sort of action and it would have been a bad day for the programme, and others like it, if he had succeeded."

Ian Hislop, the Editor of *Private Eye* and a regular team captain on *Have I Got News For You*, could barely contain his glee. "I understand litigation is a bit of a hobby of his. He's going to have to find a new hobby now," he said.



On the losing side: Rupert Allason leaving the High Court after his libel action

## Boycott's assault conviction 'set aside'

BY PAUL WILKINSON

GEOFFREY Boycott's conviction for assaulting his lover Margaret Moore had been set aside by the French courts because he was not present at the hearing, his lawyers said yesterday.

Richard Knaggs, Boycott's British solicitor, said that the former cricketer had not attended Tuesday's hearing in a French court because he expected it to be adjourned. Boycott had faxed the court at Grasse, on the French Riviera, to explain his absence, saying that he was at an international cricket tournament. The court fined him £5,000 and imposed a suspended three-month jail sentence.

However, Stéphane Choukroun, Margaret Moore's French lawyer, said yesterday that he had not been informed of any intention to rescind or set aside the verdict.

Mrs Moore, as a civil plaintiff in the case, has automatic access to any ruling of the court and M Choukroun said that he had not been informed of any such decision.

## Judge grants Clark ban on spoof diary

BY EMMA WILKINS

ALAN CLARK, the Tory MP, diarist and self-confessed philanderer, was celebrating victory yesterday after the High Court in London ruled that a spoof newspaper column damaged his reputation as a serious man of letters.

The *Evening Standard*, which was banned from further publication of *Alan Clark's Secret Political Diary* under Mr Clark's photograph, was ordered to pay costs estimated at £250,000.

The newspaper published a

revised spoof in later editions yesterday under the headline *NOT Alan Clark's Diary*, accompanied by a photograph of Mr Clark with the eyes masked out. The format was agreed by the parties' lawyers.

In the front-page spoof, written by a journalist, Peter Bradshaw, Mr Clark's victory is parodied: "The moment of ultimate triumph has an ineluctable sweetness, an almost sexual discharge of energy... A dashing and well-planned raid, completed with dazzling success. Was this how Montgomerie felt at El Alamein?"

Mr Clark, 69, who was accused of "colossal vanity" under cross-examination, said yesterday that the articles had caused him great distress. "I think that nobody likes to have people attribute to them words which are written by somebody else."

Granting the injunction, Mr Justice Lightman found that the newspaper was guilty of the common-law offence of "passing off" and false attribution of authorship under the Copyright Designs and Patents Act of 1988. He said the judgment did not bar publication of other parodies.



Clark fake column had caused "great distress"

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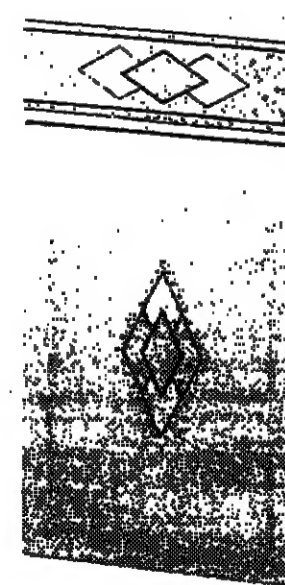
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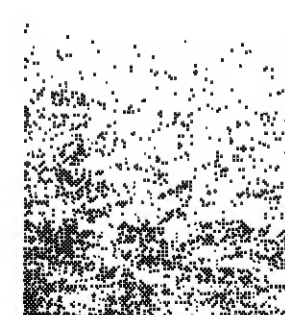
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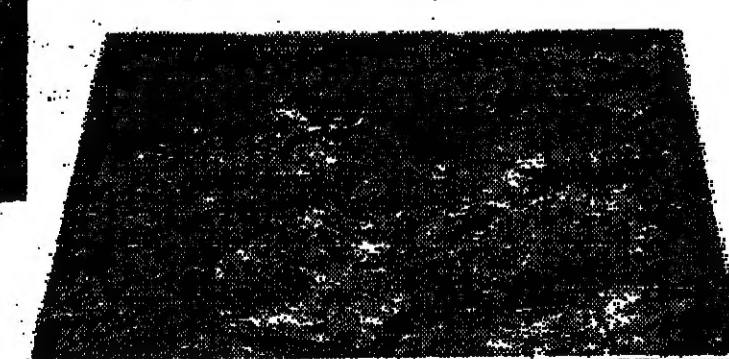
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# Calculators out in drive to raise maths standards

By JOHN O'LEARY, EDUCATION EDITOR

CHILDREN will not use calculators in lessons before the age of 8 under a blueprint for mathematics published yesterday, which is designed to help primary schools to meet higher targets for numeracy.

David Blunkett, the Education and Employment Secretary, welcomed the recommendations of a numeracy task force, which pinned its hopes on daily mathematics lessons with an accent on traditional teaching methods to raise numeracy levels before 2002.

The expert group, chaired by David Reynolds, of Newcastle University, called for regular mental and oral arithmetic to develop numeracy skills. The programme also demands more whole-class teaching, with children facing the teacher, rather than around tables.

Children would be introduced to calculators from the age of 8, but would use them regularly only in the final year of primary school, unless doing advanced work. Although the group is yet to agree a ban on calculators in earlier years, ministers have made clear that this should be a cornerstone of the drive to ensure that children grasp the basics of arithmetic.

Professor Reynolds said the approach, which will be sub-

ject to consultation before final recommendations in the spring, would mean updating successful methods, rather than going back to basics.

The 60-page report calls for a detailed framework showing what children should cover at each age. But Tony Gardiner, the president of the Mathematical Association, described the recommendations as "vague" and called for greater prescription.

International studies have shown British pupils lagging behind their counterparts in other countries in basic numeracy, although they do well in the practical application of mathematics. In response, the Government declared that three quarters of 11-year-olds should reach the expected standard by 2002, compared with barely more than half at present.

The measures mirror those adopted by the Government for literacy. Ministers have already announced a streamlining of the national curriculum in primary schools to allow teachers the time to put them into practice. Each local authority will be set its own target next autumn and Britain will take part in an international year of mathematics in 2000.

Mr Blunkett said: "Today's

report will help parents and pupils to see that numeracy skills matter as much as literacy for success in education and life after school."

Under the task force's recommendations, head teachers, governors and teachers would be given extra training to focus on "effective" methods of teaching. The literacy summer school programme launched last year would be extended to cover numeracy and parents would be helped to play a more active part in their children's education.

Mr Blunkett said he would bid for an increase in funding to give schools the resources to implement the recommendations. The methods used by 200 schools piloting the National Numeracy Project cost £18 per pupil per year.

Teachers' leaders welcomed the report. Nigel de Gruchy, general secretary of the National Association of Schoolmasters and Union of Women Teachers, said: "The Government must move with urgency to make this possible. It will have to deal with oversized classes and mixed-key-stage classes."

Doug McAvoy, general secretary of the National Union of Teachers, said teachers would be concerned if existing good practice was thrown out.



Factor of four: after Stephen Byers, left, slipped up, Heinz Wolff, Sir John Harvey-Jones, and Jilly Cooper displayed varying degrees of numeracy

## When the numbers just don't add up

John O'Leary and Tim Jones find that even ministers and other famous faces can fail to figure things out

THE Government's drive to improve the nation's numerical skills got off to a faltering start when Stephen Byers, the School Standards Minister, slipped up on his times tables during a radio interview.

Having urged all children to practise basic mathematics for an hour a day, Mr Byers was asked what eight eights were. He said: "I was aware you were going to ask me. I think it's 54."

Eleanor Oldroyd, the Radio 5 presenter, told him the answer was 56. Mr Byers said later: "This is a lesson to us all. I will be spending an hour tomorrow learning my times tables."

David Blunkett, the Education Secretary, was almost

caught out hours later when asked, in the middle of a briefing about the Government's numeracy strategy, the answer to nine eights. The response was not immediate, but Mr Blunkett recovered to give the correct answer.

"It's a long time since I've done my eight-times-table," he said. "You have helped me refresh my rustiness. We all get a little rusty, but I'm a great advocate of mental arithmetic. We all sometimes find we can't do it in the same way we could when we were fifteen." A spokesman for the

Prime Minister said that Mr Blair thought Mr Byers was an excellent minister, adding with a smile: "Those responsible for government communication should get up in lights the issues we are seeking to promote."

The Times contacted a number of prominent people yesterday and set them four questions, including the one that stumped Mr Byers. In addition to seven times eight, they were asked: give 0.5 as a fraction; give a factor of 35 which is greater than one

and how many times sixteen goes into 380 (answers below).

Sir John Harvey-Jones, former ICI chairman and industrial trouble-shooter, paused only briefly before answering the first three correctly, but thought there were 22 nineteens in 380.

Heinz Wolff, celebrity inventor and television presenter, did not even draw breath before rattling out the answers. "A certain facility in being able to do mental arithmetic is essential for everyone," he said. Jilly Cooper, the writer, fell down on question three: "I thought a factor was a French postman. I was trying to work out a feeding rate for my cats, which I suppose is vaguely mathematical."

John Sutton, general secretary of the Secondary Heads Association, appeared to stumble briefly on the second question but, to be fair, the signal to his mobile phone was breaking up.

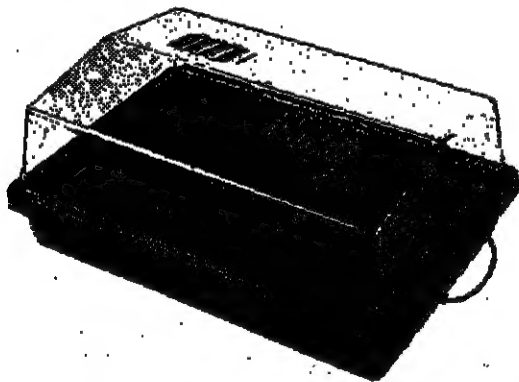
Sir Rhodes Boyson, former headmaster and Education Minister, answered the first question without hesitation but then said he was too busy to tackle the rest — an answer not recommended for GCSE students.

Answers: 56; 72; 20.

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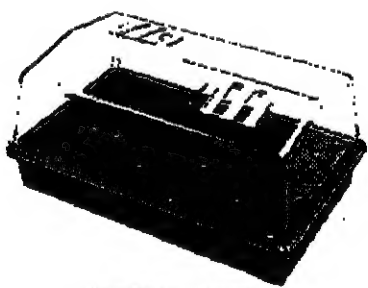
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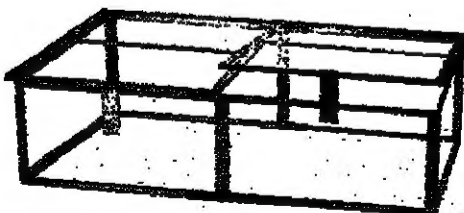
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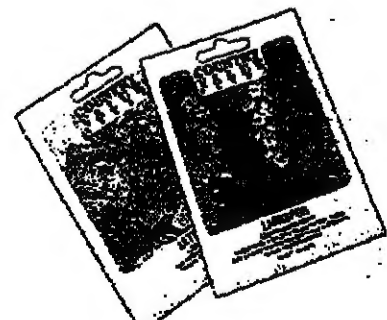
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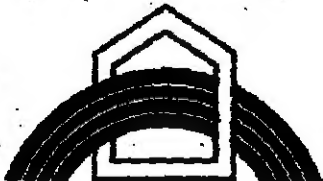
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## Boys accused of rape were in problem class

By ADRIAN LEE

DISCIPLINE in the primary school class from which four boys are accused of sexually molesting a nine-year-old girl was so bad that a team of behavioural experts had been drafted in by the education authority, a court was told yesterday.

Class Five at the West London school was singled out for help, the headmistress told the Old Bailey. Many of its 24 pupils were disruptive and their education was affected because no permanent teacher could be found and supply teachers failed to stay. In 18 months, at least ten came and went, the headmistress said.

One of the pupils accused of rape in the boys' lavatory block was among the worst offenders, often shouting and arguing with his teachers. Of Class Five, made up of nine and ten-year-olds and including the alleged victim, the

headmistress, who is in her 40s, said: "They were selected as a special class to be worked with." Many were from poor backgrounds. Twice a week, the Behaviour Support Unit from Hammersmith and Fulham council would visit.

Because of the problems of finding a permanent teacher, she said, the deputy head teacher sometimes taught the class, which was often split up to seek an improvement. Supply teachers would not stay.

The headmistress gave her views on each of the accused. She said of one boy, who denies rape and indecent assault: "He did spend a considerable time arguing, shouting about why it was wrong to accuse him or why it was someone else's fault."

A second boy, who also denies rape and indecent assault, was another source of trouble but did respond when

talked to and would apologise and improve his behaviour for a short time.

A third boy, who denies indecent assault and is accused of acting as the look-out, was an above average intelligence and a keen student. The fourth boy, who is the girl's cousin and denies indecent assault, rarely misbehaved but had once been suspended for fighting.

Mark Dennis, QC, for the prosecution, asked the headmistress: "In your view, are they fully aware of the difference between right and wrong?"

She replied: "Yes, in my view they are."

Mr Dennis asked her if she thought the boys realised it was "seriously wrong" to hurt someone or "to gang up on them." The headmistress said she thought they all did. The trial continues.

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مركز الامن

# KGB planned murder and mayhem in Britain

Intelligence and counter-intelligence were the unseen weapons of the Cold War, no more so than in the months leading up to the clear-out of 105 Soviet intelligence personnel from London in 1971. Newly released secret files show that MI5 and MI6 had learnt that up to

40 Soviet intelligence officers were running secret agents in government and in industry in Britain. Plans were in place to create mayhem by sabotage in case of war. CHRISTOPHER ANDREW, professor of modern and contemporary history at Cambridge University,

assesses the role played by intelligence in British foreign policy, as revealed in the Foreign Office files, and looks at the different approaches to diplomacy with Moscow taken by different Prime Ministers, and their effectiveness.

## Released files reveal the background to Heath's expulsion of Soviet agents

SIR Alexander Cadogan, Permanent Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office during the Second World War, once described intelligence as "the missing dimension of most diplomatic history".

That, in the traditional Whitehall view, was how it was intended to remain. None of the many official volumes of Foreign Office documents published until now has included any of the secret documents kept in the Permanent Under-Secretary's department. With the publication today of an impressive new series of *Documents on British Policy Overseas* since the 1960s, the department has begun at last to yield its secrets. The Foreign Office editors, Gill Bennett and Keith Hamilton, have had access for the first time to files that some believed would never see the light of day.

Among the documents is the record of a meeting in May 1971 at which the Director-General of MI5, Sir Martin Furnival Jones, told senior Whitehall officials: "At least 30 or 40 Soviet intelligence officers in this country [are] actually running secret agents in government or industry." Sir John Rennie, the chief of the Secret Intelligence Service (SIS or MI6), agreed. Other intelligence from MI5 included a report on a Soviet scheme to steal the plans of Concorde.

The eventual response of the Heath Government to the



Harold Wilson and Margaret Thatcher: two very different approaches to the use of intelligence

increasing scale of Soviet espionage was the aptly named Operation Foot, the expulsion from Britain of 105 Soviet intelligence personnel.

Even the newly released files, important though they are, do not tell the whole story of Foot. We now know that Oleg Lyalin, an MI5 agent in the KGB's London residency who defected on the eve of the expulsions, had revealed the activities of a shadowy Department V, whose chief task was to make contingency plans for sabotage in Nato countries in the event of war.

In Britain these plans included assassinating government leaders, blowing up military installations and flooding the Underground system. Lyalin's task was to co-ordinate the mayhem that would be carried out by KGB

agents already in Britain and by Soviet special forces who would be sent to join them.

Evidently, Lyalin's intelligence was too highly classified even to be kept in the departmental files. Some indication of the extraordinary secrecy with which it was handled, however, is provided by a secret letter in the files from Sir John Killick, the British Ambassador in Moscow. "Despite natural curiosity," Sir John wrote, "I have no wish to ask for information derived from the whole operation and notably from Lyalin, which I do not need to know."

Among other classified files available to the editors of *Documents on British Policy Overseas* are those of the Cabinet Office, including the records of the Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC) which,

ever since the Second World War, has pulled together secret and unclassified information from Whitehall and the intelligence agencies.

Most accounts of British policy during the Cold War make no reference to the JIC. A recent thesis by Alex Craig, the young Cambridge historian, argues persuasively that, despite occasional eccentricities — such as the belief that London "jitterbug clubs" were potential hotbeds of Soviet subversion — "the JIC was the most effective organisation on either side of the Atlantic conducting intelligence analysis in the early Cold War".

The documents published today contain some support from Sir Alec Douglas-Home for Mr Craig's argument. While Foreign Secretary in the Heath Government, Sir Alec noted on a 1972 JIC assessment of the Soviet threat: "I think all the information which I could require is in this excellent analysis."

As the Cold War progressed, the JIC became increasingly influential. Margaret Thatcher, the greatest enthusiast for intelligence to become Prime Minister, since Sir Winston Churchill, occasionally attended the committee herself: from 1985 its chairman, Sir Percy Cradock, was also her foreign-policy adviser. The files for the Thatcher years, whose publication is some way off, should make fascinating reading.

In the meantime, the expertly edited new volumes of



## Wilson played safe over invasion

BY MICHAEL EVANS

THE invasion of Czechoslovakia by armoured columns on August 24, 1968, sent left of the street of Prague — provoked worldwide condemnation, but the British Cabinet seemed anxious to avoid upsetting the Russians too much and put long-term relations at risk, according to the Foreign Office files.

The day after the invasion, the Cabinet, chaired by Harold Wilson, agreed that the Government should seek "to obtain worldwide condemnation of the Soviet action but to avoid becoming singled out as particularly hostile".

The Cabinet was concerned about trade relations with the Warsaw Pact countries that had taken part in the occupation. Although ministerial visits were generally cancelled, it was decided that visits "in the pursuit of important business should go ahead with the minimum of publicity". The Cabinet concluded that there did not seem to be "at present any threat to peace in Europe generally".

*Documents on British Policy Overseas* help to decide, in retrospect, one of the recurrent dilemmas of British policy during the Cold War: whether the best way to try to persuade the Soviet Union to behave decently — over human rights, for example — was by quiet diplomacy behind the scenes,

or whether it was necessary to resort to public pressure.

Harold Wilson usually preferred the behind-the-scenes route. On some occasions, as when negotiating the release of the imprisoned British lecturer, Gerald Brooke, Wilson's tone when talking to the Soviet Union became almost apologetic. Moscow was unimpressed. Wilson's Foreign Secretary, Michael Stewart, who favoured a more robust approach, complained privately in 1969 of "a note of contempt in the manner in which Russians deal with and

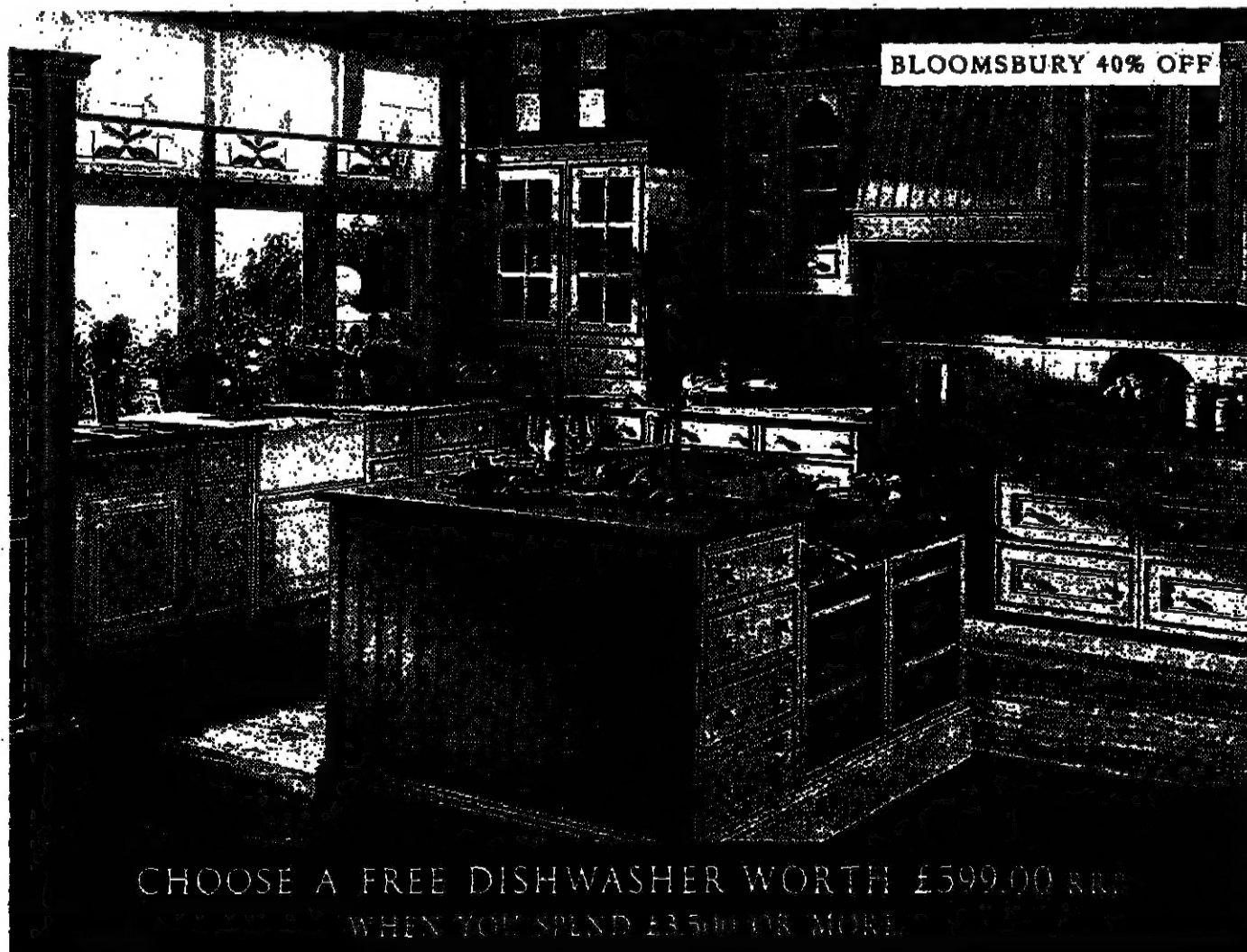
that public pressure is counterproductive. But throughout the Cold War, organisations such as Amnesty International, prepared to name prisoners of conscience and lobby publicly for their release, achieved far more than those such as the World Council of Churches whose timid, inconspicuous representations did almost nothing to diminish religious persecution.

The experience of the Cold War suggests that Robin Cook is right to make public his support for China's political prisoners.

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The experience of the Cold War suggests that Robin Cook is right to make public his support for China's political prisoners.

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## Britten blackmailed Kremlin about tour

BY VALERIE ELLIOTT, WHITEHALL EDITOR

BENJAMIN BRITTEN refused to take part in a British festival of music in Russia in 1971 unless the Kremlin allowed his cellist friend Mstislav Rostropovich and the pianist Sviatoslav Richter to perform. Rostropovich had angered the Russians by speaking up for Soviet writers and musicians and criticising the government's attitude to Solzhenitsyn.

Britten's manoeuvring is revealed in the papers released today by the Foreign Office. The tactic paid off. The Russian authorities were so keen to welcome a composer of Britten's stature, they even allowed Rostropovich and Richter to play with Britten in Leningrad, a symbolic performance because the cellist had refused to play in the city for five years.

Sir Duncan Wilson, British Ambassador to Moscow, in a letter to Sir Alec Douglas-Home, the Foreign Secretary, wrote: "Britten told me that, on this occasion of Rostropovich's reappearance, the tension in his performance was remarkable and disturbing." The following day Sir Duncan found that the Ministry of Culture had not passed on invitations to the Richters and Rostropovich for lunch at the British Embassy and insisted they should do so.

In a reference to Britten's homosexual relationship with Peter Pears, he also told Sir Alec that Britten had spent most of the visit "engaged in a sort of private duel with his 'escort' from Gostokov, Miss Sokolova, who felt cheated of her prey by reason of him and Peter Pears staying with me at this embassy. This involved some nerve-strains and comedy which are better recorded elsewhere."

Meanwhile, it was also revealed that, three years earlier, Harold Wilson, the Prime Minister, had been more concerned with his press image than the plight of Gerald Brooke, a Briton sentenced to five years in Siberia for smuggling anti-Soviet literature.

On a visit to Moscow Mr Wilson told Nikolai Podgorny, the Soviet President, that he shared their indignation and was prepared to take action against the CIA-backed National Labour Union, which had sent Brooke to Russia.

Mr Wilson said he "deplored every minute that had

consider clemency for the young lecturer. The KGB, however, was determined to use Brooke to secure the early release of Soviet spies Peter and Helen Kroger. They were eventually exchanged. CIA report by the JIC in 1972 reveals that the Soviet Union had more than 800 spies in Europe, most in France and Italy.



Rostropovich with his friend and ally Britten

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# Cook steps up threat of force against Iraqis

BY MICHAEL THEODOULOU IN NICOSIA  
AND MICHAEL EVANS, DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

MILITARY action against Iraq appeared increasingly likely yesterday as the Foreign Secretary said President Saddam Hussein's regime was producing enough anthrax to fill two warheads a week.

After Richard Butler, the United Nations chief weapons inspector, left Baghdad empty-handed, having failed to win a promise of unconditional access to presidential sites suspected of hoarding biological warfare material, Robin Cook indicated the urgency of the new standoff.

Speaking in Hong Kong, he said: "With every passing day, Saddam Hussein can continue to expand his arsenal of chemical or biological weapons. Every week, Saddam Hussein is creating enough additional anthrax to fill two missile warheads."

His warning echoed claims by William Cohen, the US Defence Secretary, that Iraq was developing VX nerve gas and anthrax weapons, a tiny quantity of which could kill thousands of people.

After Mr Butler's unsuccessful Baghdad visit, Mr Cook said: "We cannot allow him [Saddam] to decide where the inspectors go." He added: "Saddam Hussein claims 45 presidential sites. It is difficult to see why the leader of Iraq requires quite so many different palaces to himself when his own people are living in great hardship." If Iraq were allowed to prevent inspec-

tions, the Foreign Secretary said, "we will never be able to assure the world that we have succeeded in stopping Saddam Hussein having a chemical or biological capacity."

Leaving Baghdad, Mr Butler said that the Iraqi bar "flies in the face" of the UN Security Council, to which he will report tomorrow. Iraq refused even to discuss the issue until April, and only then if technical experts had, in the meantime, given a positive report on attempts to rid the country of its weapons of mass destruction. Mr Butler was told that Iraq wanted a freeze on palace inspections.

Britain rejected Iraq's demands and Mr Cook said the military option, to force Saddam's compliance with the UN resolutions, could not be ruled out. The Foreign Secretary said that, as long as Saddam persisted in developing weapons of mass destruction and obstructing the UN

inspection teams, "no option is ruled out". HMS *Invisible*, the Royal Navy aircraft carrier which was ordered to the Gulf last Friday, is expected to arrive in the area tomorrow or Saturday, joining two American carrier battle groups.

An Iraqi diplomat in New York dismissed as "propaganda" Mr Cook's anthrax accusation. The diplomat denied that his country held any of the deadly germ warfare agent, and said: "At the end of the war, Iraq had no activities in any biological or chemical weapons."

The UN arms inspectors, however, have found substantial evidence of a biological warfare programme and have blown up one building that was being used for the purpose.

Iraq's resolve to obstruct the UN inspectors could be put to the test as early as today if the team attempts a surprise visit to an "off-limit" site. "I cannot rule out that tomorrow or the next day I will authorise an inspection," an exhausted Mr Butler said before leaving Baghdad after two days of "tough talks" with a team of senior Iraqi officials led by Tariq Aziz, the Deputy Prime Minister.

Mr Butler added that Iraq knew it was defying the will of the Security Council, but was willing to "take its chances". It also insisted that Saddam's deadline for UN inspectors to complete their work by May 20 still stood. The UN has rejected that "arbitrary" date.

## West prepares action plan

New York: Britain and the United States are expected to ask the Security Council to pass a tough resolution setting the stage for military action to punish Iraq for blocking the weapons inspectors (James Bone writes). The measure could also suspend the regular 60-day reviews of the oil embargo on Iraq.

## Kinnock puts Europe on course

FROM CHARLES BRENNER  
IN BRUSSELS

EUROPE could join Russia in creating a space-based global navigation system if the United States refuses to share its own version of the equipment which will be used on almost all air, sea and land transport. The European Commission said yesterday that there was

an urgent need to ensure an independent system for the next generation global navigation satellite system (GNSS), along with a share of the vast commercial benefits that will accrue from it. Europe could develop its own system, but it preferred partnership. Neil Kinnock, the Transport Commissioner, said:

While the Americans were not enthusiastic about sharing their technology and control, the Russians were keen to talk about a joint effort, he said. "There is a possibility that GNSS-2 will be effectively based on a Russian system." At present, the American Global Positioning System, run by the US military, dominates the field.



Heide Fritzsche-Garthe, the leader of a suspected doomsday religious sect, who is charged with attempted murder and trying to inducting her 31 followers to commit suicide, speaking to journalists outside Tenebris prison yesterday after being freed on bail.

## Court frees 'suicide sect' leader

8 hours before the group believed the world would end. The followers, police said, believed a spaceship would pick up their bodies at Teide

mountains on the Canary Island. Fran Fritzsche-Garthe denies the existence of a suicide plan. The sect has been linked to the Order of the Solar Temple, whose followers have carried out mass suicides in Canada, France and Switzerland. (AP)

## Kohl offended by Italian media lampoons

FROM RICHARD OWEN IN ROME



The front-page cartoon in Corriere della Sera

DESPITE the bonhomie of Helmut Kohl's visit to Rome to reassure Italy during the countdown to the European single currency, it emerged yesterday that the German Chancellor is "deeply offended" by Italian press comment on his "arrogance" over the euro, including a cartoon depicting him as a Nazi concentration camp guard.

The caricature on the front page of Corriere della Sera on the day of his talks with Professor Romano Prodi, the Italian Prime Minister, shows the German leader in Nazi uniform. He looms over Carlo Azeglio Ciampi, the Italian Treasury Minister, who is dressed in a striped uniform, reminiscent of a prisoner in a Nazi camp.

Italian officials were at pains yesterday to emphasise

the success of the German-Italian summit. Herr Kohl, under domestic pressure to prove there are sound economic as well as political reasons for Italian entry to the euro, was quoted as saying that "Europe without Italy" was inconceivable, though the "final decision" on which countries meet the criteria should be made in three months' time.

"We all have to do our homework," the Chancellor said. "We get the marks in May." He said it was up to each country to put its own house in order.

Hans Tietmeyer, the Bundesbank president, told Corriere della Sera that Signor Ciampi was "on the right lines" in seeking to cut the Italian budget deficit to 3 per cent of gross domestic product. But German and Dutch officials are concerned at the

size of the Italian national debt. They suggest that Italian budget manoeuvres amount to "creative accounting". Italian nervousness over the euro has led to a series of anti-Kohl lampoons, irritably described by the Chancellor over dinner with Signor Prodi as "extremely stupid". Last night, he said through gritted teeth to Italian reporters: "This is the real me. I hope Italians will now see how I really am."

## Paris drivers hail traffic wardens' strike

Paris: The French capital has seen an unprecedented drop in parking fines this week, not because of a sudden change of heart by motorists but because most of the city's traffic wardens have gone on strike (Ben Macintyre writes).

The stoppage, one of the most popular yet in France, means that the city's drivers, most of whom ignore parking regulations or refuse to feed meters any way, can leave their vehicles illegally parked indefinitely without having to go to the bother of leaving up a parking ticket. The notoriously ruthless wardens, known as "petits" with affection as "periwinkles" because of their vivid blue uniforms, have struck over a plan by the Paris prefecture to increase their working hours. About four fifths of the wardens have joined the strike and the number of parking tickets handed out has dropped by almost three fifths. The

striking wardens are ignoring lesser parking offences while still giving tickets for blocking roads or parking on pavements. But traffic anarchy looms if they carry out a threat to "harden the strike" and leave motorists to police themselves.

"The striking 'periwinkles' say they are finding it hard to adapt to being congratulated by supportive motorists. 'It is mad how popular our strike is,' one told Le Parisien. 'People like us' at last."

## Jospin fights to rally support for shorter week

FROM BEN MACINTYRE IN PARIS

FRANCE'S Finance Minister has warned that that thousands more jobs will be lost if bosses took a concerted stand against a government plan to cut the working week to 35 hours. The warning came as Lionel Jospin, the Socialist Prime Minister, prepared to defend his hotly contested employment policies in a televised address last night.

Faced with a mounting revolt over unemployment and fierce opposition from employers, Dominique Strauss-Kahn, the Finance Minister, laid out the best and worst-case scenarios for the Government's project to cut four hours from the French working week. According to the most optimistic projection, he said, if the new 35-hour week was generally accepted by employers and accompanied by a wage freeze negotiated with the unions, 600,000 new jobs could be created by 2002.

But he also said that a far more bleak outlook was in store if more than half of French businesses refuse to comply with the 35-hour week and wages rise substantially. M. Strauss-Kahn said this could add another percentage point to the jobless total, now standing at a near-record 12.4 per cent, or 3.1 million people.

The 35-hour week project will be debated in parliament next week.

The Finance Minister's more upbeat forecast was

working hours will have precisely the reverse effect, encouraging many employers to lay off staff and compounding the French jobless crisis. "The 35-hour week will destroy more jobs than it will create," the CNPF said this week.

In a speech to the National Assembly on Tuesday, M. Jospin repeated that tackling unemployment was his prime objective and insisted that the 35-hour week would go ahead. The Prime Minister has rejected jobless protesters' demands for a general increase in unemployment benefits, insisting that these would derail France's plans to reduce its deficit in time for European economic and monetary union. "The French people know that it is impossible to do everything immediately," he said.

Last night's television address was an attempt by the Socialist leader to rally support after a bruising month in which his popularity has slumped and deep divisions have appeared within the left-wing coalition over unemployment and Europe.

The plight of France's 3.1 million unemployed has been espoused by the Opposition, the President and the press, but also by the public (70 per cent according to the latest surveys) and, most worrying of all for M. Jospin, by Communists and Greens within the ruling coalition. These

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# Bombers hit heart of Algiers

BOMBS rocked the centre of Algiers yesterday, leaving at least two dead and many injured. One device exploded in the city's old quarter without causing casualties after the area was cleared. A second, larger bomb, went off in the early afternoon near the university campus, killing at least two people.

The latest bombings came a day after two explosions killed 11 people on an Algiers bus and at a market about 20 miles west of the capital. They also followed the visit of European Union delegates who urged the authorities to be more open about the violence nationally.

As a result of the deteriorating situation around the capital, Ahmed Cuyahia, the Prime Minister, was to be questioned for the first time by parliamentarians last night.

More than 1,000 people have been



**Government pride and the negligence of the army are aggravating the effects of terrorist attacks by Islamic extremists, Anthony Loyd reports from Algiers**

killed in massacres since the Muslim holy month of Ramadan began on December 30. The authorities have been accused of being behind some of the massacres. Critics cite government restrictions on the media, its censored casualty figures, and the instances of security forces standing by without intervening as terrorist attack villages.

But diplomatic sources in Algiers believe the evidence points towards culpability, and in some cases complicity, rather than direct involve-

ment. "We really don't believe that the Government is doing this," one Western diplomat said. "There may be instances in which army units have failed to react while old scores are levelled between rival Islamic groups. But I don't know of one credible foreign source who has evidence to support the conspiracy theories."

He added: "The Algerians are a very proud people, and their refusal to invite the UN rapporteurs, as well as humanitarian aid from outside,

stems as much from this as anything else."

Algerian sensitivity to what is seen as outside interference shows even in the attitude of Muhammad Rezzag-Bara, president of the National Observatory for Human Rights, an independent organisation in Algiers.

"Everybody here knows who is doing the killings — the fundamentalists — but the West is pressing our Government to accept UN rapporteurs to investigate," Mr Rezzag-Bara said. "The atmosphere of this is not acceptable to Algerians. The question of humanitarian aid has been presented as one in which the Government is negligent and incapable. We might need assistance but it has to be presented another way."

Although the conflict has been going on for more than six years, the army has failed to make any signifi-

cant progress against the Armed Islamic Group, which appears able to strike at villages on the periphery of the capital almost at will.

The massacre at the village of Sidi Hammed ten days ago, in which almost 200 people died, took place a bare half-hour's drive from the centre of Algiers and lasted more than an hour and a half. Conscript troops were on the periphery of the village within 15 minutes, according to the evidence of survivors. Yet no soldiers moved into Sidi Hammed until the last of the terrorists had gone.

"I too have much pride," said Ahmed Daoudji, a middle-aged man who escaped the killing, as he tramped through the burnt-out ruin of his home. "I am more sad for having been reduced to a vagabond than by losing my house. I have nothing, and no one will help us."

## WORLD IN BRIEF

### Avian flu blamed on Hong Kong

The World Health Organisation said yesterday that China is not the source of the avian flu that killed six people in Hong Kong, made 12 ill and threatened an epidemic (Jonathan Mirsky writes). Dr Daniel Lavanchy, the WHO's chief virologist, said after his team had been in China for a week that Hong Kong's dirty chicken farms were probably to blame.

The Chinese authorities immediately said chickens would be allowed into Hong Kong, probably by tomorrow, from Guangdong province, which before the ban imposed late last month was exporting 75,000 fowl a day into Hong Kong, four fifths of the city's consumption. Beijing and Guangdong have been saying for some time that no sign of the H5N1 virus had been found in either poultry or people on the mainland.

### Briton killer's plea rejected

Los Angeles: Richard Keech, 78, a Second World War veteran convicted of murdering his British son-in-law, has been sentenced to between 35 years and life in prison, despite claiming he was suffering post-traumatic stress disorder and had flashbacks to a Japanese prison camp when he opened fire. The former Marine had described the victim, Nicholas Candy, as a dangerous man who mounted a "campaign of terror" against the Keech family during a custody battle with Keech's daughter, Nancy, over their child. (Reuters)

### Iran returns Emir's swords

Tehran: Swords and a silver tea set belonging to the Emir of Kuwait have been returned to the monarch by Iranian authorities who seized them from smugglers in a sting operation. The valuables, presented to the Emir by the Queen, were plundered by Iraqi troops during their occupation of the emirate, the Iranian *Abrar* newspaper said. "The items bear the emblem of Kuwait's Royal Family," it said. (AP)

### Ivana Trump in press deal

Split: Ivana Trump, right, is to become a major shareholder of the second-biggest Croatian daily newspaper, *Slobodna Dalmacija*, and has said she will be writing a weekly column. The former wife of Donald Trump, the US tycoon, who received a \$25 million (£15 million) divorce settlement, said: "I have written books and have always been interested in publishing. Now I can fulfil my wishes by having a daily newspaper." (AFP)



### Crocodiles kill 20 villagers

Kinshasa: Crocodiles have killed 20 villagers in a wave of attacks in the Democratic Republic of Congo. According to reports on official radio from Bandundu, 150 miles from Kinshasa, the crocodiles have become extremely aggressive this month, attacking canoes and crawling into fields bordering the Kasai River to attack people, especially children. Villagers want the authorities to intervene. (AFP)

### Wife murderer, 91, jailed

Jerusalem: A 91-year-old Nazi Holocaust survivor convicted of murdering his wife by stabbing her 60 times has been jailed for seven years by an Israeli court. "I lived with her for 47 years, but not one day did I know any rest," said Kopel Forechnik. Police said that he had continued to stab the body of his wife, Hannah, "in rage" long after she died. (Reuters)

## Mugabe troops swoop to seize township loot

FROM SAM KILEY IN HARARE

LOOTED bars of soap, bags of beans and schoolbags wrapped in plastic bags were dragged from their hiding places beneath piles of rubbish yesterday by heavily armed Zimbabwean commandos, sent into Harare's townships to quell three days of riots against the rule of President Mugabe.

Young men were bundled into the back of their lorry, without protest, as their mothers stood by, also silent. A word of dissent, they knew, would be met with a beating or a bullet. "The soldiers have orders to shoot us. We can do nothing," an elderly woman said as her son was shoved on to the army lorry.

"Faster, faster," shouted a lieutenant to his men as they worked through Chitungwiza, a township on the outskirts of the capital. The township was silenced by Mr Mugabe's "shoot to kill" order to 40,000 soldiers in an attempt to regain the initiative from a coalition of business, unions, farmers, workers, the unemployed and shanty town thugs who all want him out of power.

"Look at this," Reuben Ndegwa, a motor mechanic whose business was wrecked

by looters on Tuesday, said. "We have nearly nothing, and the soldiers come and take that from us. They are our sons, why has he turned them against us? My own livelihood was destroyed by the young people. But they are just reacting to the violence of the regime," he added as bakers and shopkeepers swept the glass from their floors and scratched through the debris for anything salvageable.

Reeling from street protests against sudden rises in the price of maize, Mr Mugabe's Government appears to be lurching from crisis to crisis. It seems to have few ideas about how to overcome the problems, other than by imposing draconian edicts against demonstrators or by threatening to turn the economic clock back 15 years to the days when his Government fixed prices, set wages and bankrupted the country by hiring 70,000 unemployed civil servants.

Mr Mugabe's only hope of garnering enough support to avoid more violent objections to his 17 years in office lies in persuading the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund to release hundreds of millions of pounds of aid frozen four years ago.



A Thai policeman holds a protester while his partner clubs him yesterday in Bangkok. A thousand car workers blocked a main road, demanding higher wages in the face of the country's economic crisis. Sixty were arrested.

## Cook praises China over takeover of colony

FROM JAMES PRINGLE IN HONG KONG

ROBIN COOK yesterday praised China for giving the former British territory the autonomy promised in Sino-British agreements, and in let-

ting "Hong Kong people run Hong Kong."

On the final day of a whirlwind visit to China and Hong Kong, the Foreign Secretary said that, since the handover on June 30, Hong Kong was still running "fairly and effi-

ciently". The rule of law was alive and well with the impartiality and excellence of the Civil Service.

In remarks to British businessmen that are sure to please Beijing, he said Hong Kong's society "remains open

and tolerant". But he said Britain had real concerns about arrangements for May's Legislative Council elections that include a reduction in the franchise to elect special interest groups, such as business people.

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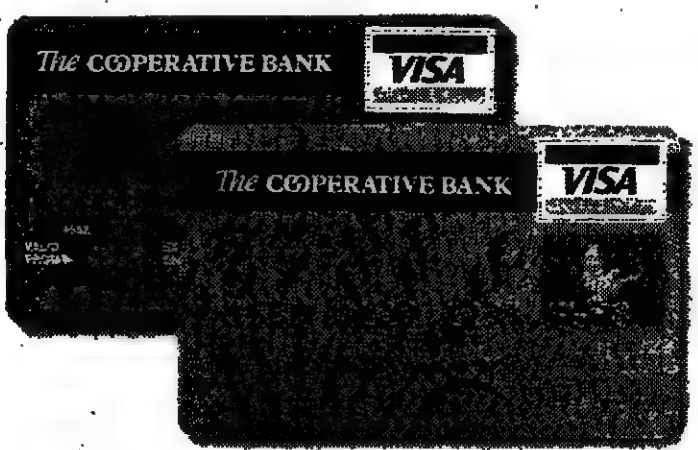
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**Dr Thomas Stuttford** reports on prizewinning drugs, bowel cancer, schizophrenia, worries over measles jabs and the memory loss suffered by those with Alzheimer's

## When a drunk is not an alcoholic

Actors are awarded Oscars, whereas successful pharmacologists are given a Prix Galien. Each year a panel of distinguished doctors and scientists, who are not employed in the pharmaceutical industry, meet to reward those who have been responsible for the introduction of new drugs that are likely to be of the greatest benefit to humanity.

This week, Frank Dobson, the Secretary of State for Health, made the presentations. All three of the preparations chosen for commendation are used in psychiatry. The winner was Zyprexa, manufactured by Eli Lilly. It is one of the atypical antipsychotics, a group of drugs that will revolutionise the treatment of schizophrenia. One of the two runners-up was Aricept, made by Eisai-Pfizer, which improves the memory, for a short time in some patients who are suffering from mild to moderate Alzheimer's disease. The third preparation to be honoured was Campral, produced by Lipha, used to treat heavy drinkers who are alcohol-dependent.

Not all regular heavy drinkers are alcohol-dependent, and nor are all those whose antisocial drinking may lead to trouble with family, friends, colleagues and police. The term "alcoholic" is used far too readily but even the most sceptical agree that there are 300,000 alcohol-dependent people in the United Kingdom. The oft-repeated assertion that there are

more than a million drinkers whose intake is harmful to their health is more questionable.

One of the problems doctors face when discussing excessive drinking with patients is that the safety limits were previously set so absurdly low that once the Government's approved figure had been mentioned, the credibility of all subsequent advice was undermined.

Campral is a drug to treat alcohol dependency—a compulsion to drink, increased tolerance to alcohol, the withdrawal symptoms which arise if drink is not available and that are immediately relieved by alcohol, and an obsession with alcohol.

Campral won't, however, be of any use in dealing with the tiresome type of heavy drinker who remains sober for days or weeks before indulging in a binge. This drinking is often associated with aggressive or other antisocial behaviour. Dr Richard Latham is a psychiatrist who not only sits on the Secretary of State's advisory panel on psychiatry and driving, but also has a profound knowledge of fine burgundies. Dr Latham has recently written in *The Practitioner* about managing the heavy drinker. He makes the point that the periodic drunk, also known as the epsilon alcoholic, is likely to be an impulsive person who might do better attending an anger management clinic rather than one for alcohol dependence.

Dr Latham makes several sugges-



Unlike Dudley Moore's *Arthur*, many heavy drinkers take the advice of their doctors to stop imbibing

tions as to how alcohol dependence may be diagnosed and distinguished from other forms of drinking. The blood tests that are often accepted as evidence are unreliable and are better at showing heavy drinking than dependence. But even so, only 60 per cent of heavy drinkers have an increase in the liver enzyme gamma GT, and only 30 per cent have the abnormalities in their red blood cells that are associated with an excessive alcohol intake.

Dr Latham points out that up to 50 per cent of heavy problem drinkers respond to brief advice and appropriate educational literature, albeit that their treatment is probably better

taken in conjunction with the local alcohol help group. Those who are alcohol-dependent and do not respond to standard advice need referral to a specialist unit.

It is the patients who can be shown to be dependent on alcohol who improve with Campral. Campral may appeal to the trendy as it is closely related to taurine, a common ingredient in many oriental medicines which are prescribed to treat the craving for drugs. Campral is the first preparation to be introduced for alcohol-dependence in more than 40 years, and has a quite different action to, for instance, Antabuse, which is used in aversion therapy.

Campral acts by correcting imbalances in the neuro-transmitters working within the brain. The transmitters are reputed to be dysfunctional in those who crave alcohol or drugs, and hence Campral acts directly to limit craving. This is important as although it is comparatively easy for the alcohol-dependent patient to give up for a time, the urge to return to drinking is very strong, particularly in those who have been dependent drinkers from an early age. A year after the start of treatment with Campral, nearly twice as many patients were still abstinent compared to those who were treated with a placebo.

## Sanctuary in new drugs

Earlier in the week, the Health Secretary, Frank Dobson, talked about the inadequate provision of long-term in-patient care still needed by many psychiatric patients.

Although he did not specify schizophrenia, most of the recent cases that have ended in tragedy both for assailant and victim have occurred because the patient has either been misdiagnosed, has failed to co-operate with treatment, or there has been no available hospital bed in which they could find sanctuary when their condition deteriorated. These patients are too often cast out into the community, in many cases only to live a vagabond's existence.

Most schizophrenic patients are frightened and depressed and need to be understood and pitied rather than feared, but even so it is undeniable that the delusions and frustrations that afflict many of them can occasionally lead to violent behaviour. All schizophrenic patients are more likely to be violent than other people, but their assaults account for only a small proportion of the incidents that come to the attention of the authorities.

It is becoming more generally accepted that the recognition of schizophrenia can be hampered by too rigid an interpretation of the criteria previously thought necessary for its diagnosis. Frequently a patient's family and friends are aware that the person's condition is deteriorating, but because of the lack of strictly defined symptoms, suitable care is withheld.

Schizophrenia symptoms vary in degrees of severity. One per cent of the population will need treatment for schizophrenia before they reach the age of 45, and at any time there are 250,000 such patients in the UK having treatment. The symptoms are divided into three groups. The positive symptoms are those in which the patient actually experiences strange happenings such as hallucinations, suffers from delusions or behaves in a bizarre way. Schizophrenic patients find normal human relations difficult as many speak and act in a way thought inappropriate by those they meet in everyday life.

The negative symptoms are those that cause the patient to withdraw from life: these patients think slowly, feel emotions less strongly than others, suffer from inertia and show a lack of enterprise. More than 75 per cent of schizophrenic patients suffer from depression at some time, and they are 12 times more likely to commit suicide than other people. The third group of symptoms, which don't affect all patients, produce a deterioration in intelligence and memory.

The great advantage of the prize-winning drug Zyprexa is that, like the other atypical antipsychotics, it does not only treat the positive symptoms—as did the older antipsychotics, which were regarded by patients as the "liquid cosh"—but treats all three groups of symptoms. Older drugs did not so much eradicate hallucinations, but rather took away the patient's fear of them, and acted as a tranquilliser.

Zyprexa in some cases goes some way to restoring the patient's normality: those who respond may not only stop having hallucinations and delusions but are more cheerful and better socially integrated.

The new atypical antipsychotics represent a great advance in psychiatric treatment; Zyprexa is the second in this group to win a Prix Galien award. Last year Risperdal, made by Janssen/Organon, was also honoured.

## Why Alzheimer's sufferers are grateful for the memory

THERE are more than 500,000 people in the United Kingdom who suffer from Alzheimer's disease. Many of them have such bad memories that they are unable to remember how a newspaper article began by the time they reach its end.

Aricept Donepezil, which was first introduced in 1997 and has won a Prix Galien

award, so improves the memory in 20 to 30 per cent of the 100,000-200,000 patients in the early stages of Alzheimer's that they are able to return to enjoying editorials in *The Times*. The drug also arrests further deterioration caused by the disease in a further 50 per cent of cases.

Not only do those who have been successfully treated with

Aricept return to their newspapers, but they also find it easier to remember names, faces and appointments. In addition, they are sharper in conversation, neater in dress and once again understand how the video, cash dispenser and washing machine work. Unfortunately, the improvement is not lasting, and the full effect may not be

noticed for six months. However, a third of the patients are still benefiting from treatment after two years.

Aricept is important, not only because it gives many patients with Alzheimer's a better quality of life for a time, but also because it is the first drug to improve memory that is both safe and, in many cases at least, effective.

DOCTORS as well as patients have been worried by a possible association of measles with Crohn's disease. In 1994 and 1996, two Swedish studies suggested that babies who had been exposed to measles (in utero) had an increased risk of developing Crohn's later. This is a most unpleasant inflammatory bowel disease which can lead to a lifetime of

trouble. The fear was that if babies subjected to measles are more likely to develop Crohn's, would some of the many people immunised with a live vaccine suffer in a similar way? Further studies have cast doubt upon the relevance of

the initial research. A huge project carried out in Copenhagen looked at the city's population from 1915 to 1966 and found no relationship between early measles and Crohn's. Neither did a British study undertaken in 1995. Other studies have also

failed to establish any association, and this week a summary in the *British Medical Journal* concludes that "the theory of measles as a causative factor in the development of Crohn's disease cannot be upheld". Parents can rest happily. By having their baby vaccinated, they will not have done lasting damage to the baby's guts.

## Crohn's fear is unfounded

## Cereals cut cancer risk

THIS year has been designated the one in which Europeans are expected to become more aware of the symptoms and nature of cancer of the bowel.

This week the European Cancer Prevention Organisation (ECPO) published research which showed that a diet rich in high-fibre cereals offers some protection against the disease and possibly against malignancies in other sites too, in particular the breast.

The research also showed that most Europeans think of a high-fibre diet only as being an excellent protection against constipation, and that only 5 per cent realise that it may also protect against malignancy in the large bowel.

The chairman of ECPO, Dr



Protection: a muesli meal

Michael Hill, says: "We have always advised eating a diet rich in fruit and vegetables to reduce cancer risk."

"Following this evidence we must now add a further recommendation to people to increase their intake of cereal fibre."

The prescription of porridge or cereals for breakfast should now be included with one for greens and beans with lunch and dinner.

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## Source of both joy and sorrow

In Sylvia Plath's most famous poem, *Daddy*, she recalls her idealised vision of the New England coast while raging against the father who abandoned her by his death. "Daddy, I have had to kill you," You died before I had time - / Marble-heavy, a bag full of God, / Ghastly statue with one gray toe / Big as a Frisco seal / And a head in the freakish Atlantic / Where it pours bean green over blue / In the waters of beautiful Nauset." It is a poem that has come to epitomise the pain and anger that drove her to suicide in 1963. After her death, and her burial near Ted Hughes's family home in Yorkshire, Hughes, in *The Prism*, uses her words as a setting-off point, her childhood before her father's death the prism through which she tried to see the world. In these two poems, and in *Birthday Letters* as a whole, the impact Plath made on Hughes's life is clear. As Andrew Motion has written, this is writing by a man "obsessed, stricken and deeply loving".

It is worth noting again that although Plath is the mother of their two children, whom he raised after her death, he knew her for only seven years, 35 years ago; yet in these poems she breathes from the page.

They are not, apparently, the work of immediate grief: they have been more than two decades in the writing. Plath has cast a shadow over Hughes's life; his earlier silence, his occasional outbursts on his family's behalf have made that clear enough. But these poems make clear that she also brought him joy, and that he rejoices in the two grown children, Frieda and Nicholas, to whom he has dedicated *Birthday Letters*.

It is clear too that his story is not one with a simple ending. In another poem, *Error*, he writes: "Remembering it, I see it all in a bubble / Strange people, in a closed brilliance / Laughing and crying soundlessly / Gazing out of the transparency / At a desolation. A rainy wedding picture / On a foreign grave, among lilies - / And just beneath it, unseen, the real bones / Still undergoing everything."

Erica Wagner introduces the final extract from Ted Hughes's *Birthday Letters*

# Poems in memory of Sylvia

## The Prism

The waters off beautiful Nauset  
Were the ocean sun, the sea-poured crystal  
Behind your efforts. They were your self's cradle.  
What happened to it all that winter you went  
Into your snowed-on grave, in the Pennines?  
It goes with me, your vision-stone.  
I can look into it and I'll see  
That salty globe of blue, its gull-sparkle,  
Its path of surf-groove, and  
Roaming away north  
Like the path of the Israelites  
Under the hanging, arrested hollow of thunder  
Into promise, and you walking it  
Your sloped brown shoulders, your black swim-suit,  
Towards that sea-lit sky.

Wherever you went  
It was your periscope lens,  
Between your earthenware earrings,  
Behind your eye-brightness, so lucidly balanced,  
Such a flawless crystal, so worshipped.

I still have it. I hold it -  
"The waters off beautiful Nauset."  
Your intact childhood, your Paradise  
With its pre-Adamite horse-shoe crab in the shallows  
As a guarantee, God's own trademark.  
I turn it, a prism, this way and that.  
That way I see the filmy surf-wind flicker  
Of your ecstasies, your visions in the crystal.

This way the irreparably-crushed lamp  
In my crypt of dream, totally dark,  
Under your gravestone.

## Recollections of a husband and father stricken by the loss of his wife



Sylvia Plath as a teenager

## Fingers

Who will remember your fingers?  
Their winged life? They flew  
With the light in your look.  
At the piano, stomping out hits from the forties,  
They performed an incidental clowning  
Routine of their own, deadpan puppets.  
You were only concerned to get them to the keys.  
But as you talked, as your eyes signalled  
The strobes of your elation,  
They flared, flicked balletic aerobics.  
I thought of birds in some tropical sexual  
Play of display, leaping and somersaulting,  
Doing strange things in the air, and dropping to the dust.  
Those dancers of your excess!  
With such deft, practical touches - so accurate.  
Thinking their own thoughts caressed like lightning  
The lipstick into your mouth corners.

Trim conductors of your expertise,  
Cavorting at your typewriter,  
Possessed by infant spirit, puckish,  
Who, whatever they did, danced or mimed it  
In a weightless largesse of espressivo.

I remember your fingers. And your daughter's  
Fingers remember your fingers  
In everything they do.  
Her fingers obey and honour your fingers,  
The Lares and Penates of our house.

© Ted Hughes, 1998. Extracted from *BIRTHDAY LETTERS* by Ted Hughes published by Faber and Faber Ltd. at £14.99 on 29 January 1998. It is available to Times readers now by calling the Times Bookshop on 0800 134 459

# Birth of the baby blues

In the final extract from *Baby Wars*, Dr Robin Baker and Elizabeth Oram look at postnatal depression

Ever since the time of Hippocrates, clinicians have noted mood disturbances in women who have recently given birth. In modern industrial societies, about 50 per cent of new mothers experience mild mood changes known as "baby blues". Symptoms peak three to five days after the birth and last from a few hours to a couple of weeks. Mothers with baby blues may be weepy, irritable or angry towards the baby, their partner or other family members.

Some women, however, suffer from a much more serious condition known as postnatal (or post-partum) depression. It occurs in about 10 per cent of new mothers, can strike weeks or months after the birth and last for weeks, months or even years. Women with postnatal depression can feel severe loneliness, powerlessness, guilt, embarrassment and

negative emotions towards their new baby. In the past, such mothers were often led to neglect, abandon or even kill their babies.

So how does this fit into the evolutionary biology of parenthood? The simple answer is that it is part of female family planning: a manifestation of the way natural selection has predisposed female psychology to judge how many children a woman should have, when and with whom.

A woman's subconscious aim is to produce precisely the size of family that takes maximum advantage of her status and circumstances, and coincides with the more buoyant phases of her life. To this end,

she has the body chemistry to seek sex or not to seek it, to ovulate or not, to implant the fertilised egg or not, to miscarry or not. Finally, she has the urge to look after her newborn baby - or not.

The days and weeks after giving birth represent her last real chance to appraise whether or not to try to raise the child. Once she has begun to invest milk, time and energy, it becomes increasingly disadvantageous to her long-term reproductive output to abandon the attempt.

Even if circumstances remain favourable in early pregnancy, they may deteriorate before the baby is born. The last three months are often

associated with marked changes in a woman's psychology. First, there are the well-known spells of nest-building. The mother-to-be may also go through spells of intense reappraisal of her situation, of which primary targets are her partner, home and general environment. The strategic aim of these phases is to test her support systems for signs of fragility, indicating that maybe now is not a good time to reproduce.

Postnatal depression appears to give the woman who is unsure a last opportunity to change her mind before throwing herself wholeheartedly into caring for her baby. By becoming aggressive towards her baby and partner, she tests to the maximum his willingness to help her to raise the child.

The currently favoured explanation for postnatal depression is that a baby can trigger chemical changes in parts of the mother's brain



is that it is due to chemical changes in parts of the brain which are generated by the body. There is no point in urging a sufferer to "pull herself together". The brain chemistry of depression prevents the very thought processes that might allow her to do so.

There are only two ways of changing these thought patterns. One is to administer antidepressants. The other is to find the environmental trigger that will cause the body to change its chemical instructions to the brain. In the case of postnatal depression, this means a strong show of support from the woman's partner, friends and, nowadays, social services.

Once her body receives the evidence that she will have the support she needs to raise a baby, it changes her brain chemistry, and her mood and behaviour become appropriate for motherhood.

© Times readers can buy *Baby Wars* by the university dons Robin Baker and Elizabeth Oram (bestselling authors of *Sperm Wars*) for just £11.99 (RRP £12.99, Fourth Estate) by calling The Times Bookshop on 0800 134 459

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# Why Tories should call Blair's bluff

William Hague welcomes an alliance but fears a suicide pact

On Tuesday the Prime Minister called for a "patriotic alliance" to promote Britain's interests in Europe. He may well have designed it as a prank. But let me take the risk of taking Tony Blair at his word. If he is serious about building a flexible, open Europe of nation states, then I would gladly join such an alliance; and if he is serious about his alliance being patriotic, then it must stand up for Britain being in Europe, but not run by Europe. Otherwise such an alliance will find little support among the people of this country and will not survive.

I am a positive European. I am positive about Britain's place in Europe today, and positive about Britain's role in Europe tomorrow. I celebrate the fact that Britain's history and culture are inseparable from those of other European countries. Together or against each other, we have been through revolutions, renaissances and reformations.

But our Europe today should not end at the banks of the Oder and the Danube. Poland and Hungary should be as much a part of our Europe as France and Italy. One of the most stirring moments of my life was watching on television the extraordinary pictures from east Berlin as ordinary citizens tore down the wall that divided our Continent in two. We now face an historic opportunity to bring Europe together after a century scarred by the horrors and threat of war. It would be a tragedy if we missed that opportunity and erected a new iron curtain between those countries inside the EU and those outside.

Yet I fear that is precisely what may be happening. The hurdles to enlargement are being set ever higher. According to the latest European document, those countries wishing to join the EU will now also have to join the ERM. Such a condition could hold up the process of enlargement for years.

By driving towards ever deepening political and monetary union, there is a risk that European politicians are building a regulated, protectionist, fortress Europe that will exclude half the Continent. That would be the real betrayal of the European ideal and of the peoples of Europe.

The Labour Government, in its eagerness to court popularity abroad, has signed up this agenda with hardly a murmur. The Conservatives, almost alone among Europe's mainstream political parties, has the courage and the confidence to say that the EU has got its priorities wrong.

That does not mean we are somehow anti-European. The media debate about who is "for" Europe and who is "against" Europe is an artificial one. We can all agree that Britain's future lies in the European Union. It does mean that we believe Europe is heading in the wrong direction.

With 18 million people now unemployed on the Continent, who would disagree? The truth is Europe is literally not working. The European economies are in urgent need of fundamental economic re-

form. They need to break out of the socialist culture of state intervention, government regulation and subsidy epitomised by the European Commission in Brussels. They need to tackle the escalating welfare costs that are crippling continental business.

The British EU presidency is a great opportunity for Britain to take a lead. We can get Europe's politicians to face up to these challenges and to bring the kind of Conservative economic reform that transformed our country.

Tony Blair is letting the opportunity slip through his fingers. Instead, he is importing to Britain precisely that kind of socialist regulation that has caused such misery on the Continent. By signing the social chapter, and agreeing to a new employment chapter as part of the Amsterdam Treaty, the Prime Minister has in effect handed control of Britain's employment policy over to countries with the very worst employment records in the developed world.

Like too many of Europe's politicians, Tony Blair is attempting to solve the problems of the late 1990s by applying the failed corporatist solutions of the 1960s.

They are not my solutions. I want to see a flexible EU that free up its labour markets, ease the social costs on its employers and gets on with the job of creating jobs. I want to see a free-trading Union which puts completing the single market at the very top of its agenda. I want to see an outward-looking European Union which looks beyond the Continent.

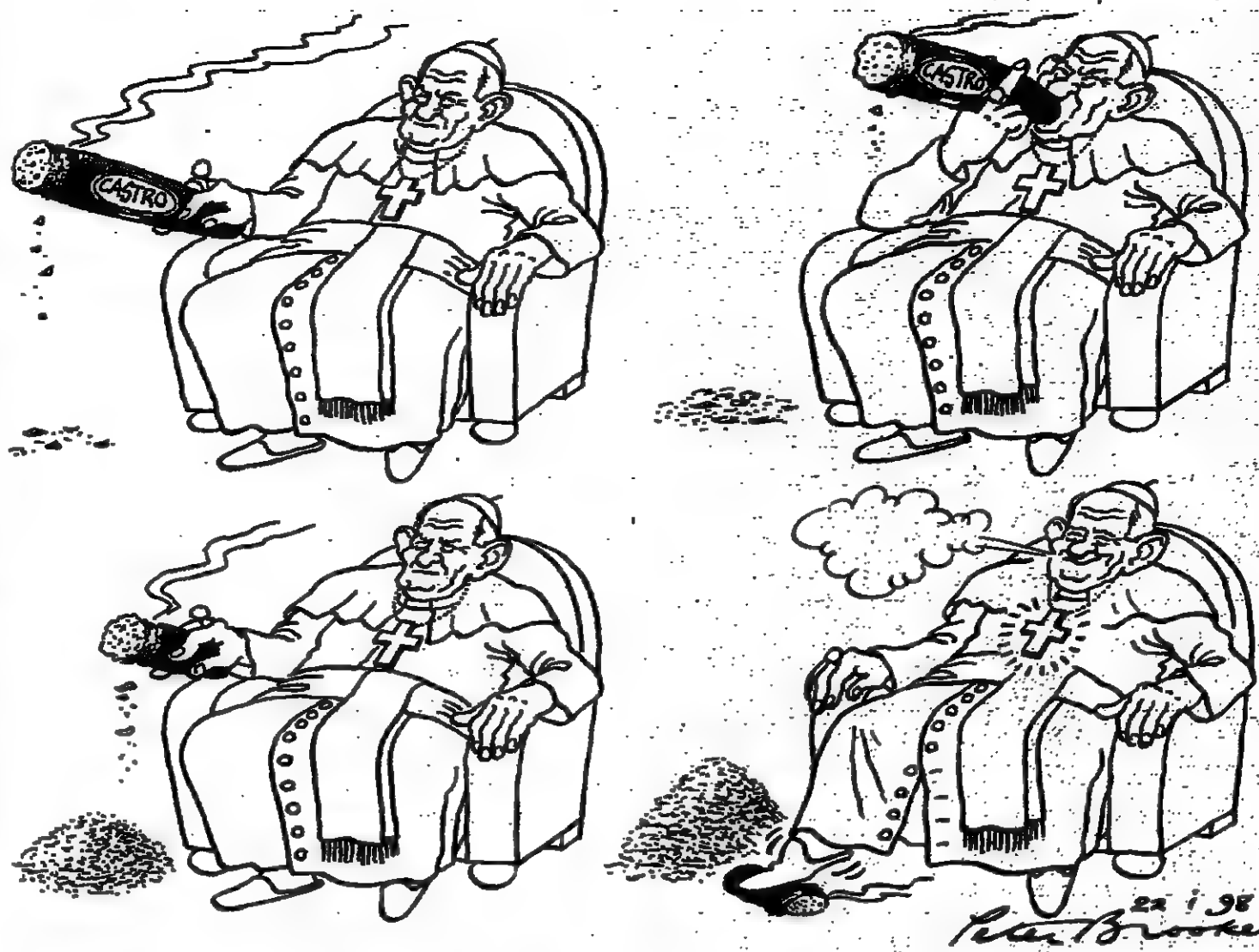
Above all, I want to see a European Union that does not aspire to be a single federal state, but which moves forward as a partnership of nations. That is why I believe a single currency should be low on Europe's list of priorities.

I happen to believe a single currency poses enormous economic risks for our country. The euro notes and coins will not even be in circulation until 2002 and I would want to see that currency working in good times and bad before anyone should contemplate the British joining.

But I also believe that a single currency could pose very serious risks not just to British sovereignty, but to the political stability of the whole of Europe. Why bet the whole of the EU's success of the past 40 years on a single horse called Euro?

That is why I say no to a single currency now and intend to say no to a single currency at the next election — subject, like all our main manifesto policies, to the agreement of party members nearer the time. The Conservative Party has a positive and a pragmatic vision of Europe. It is a vision that addresses the real priorities of the people and business of Europe, and which rejects the grand political projects and pipe-dreams of European federalism. I believe it is a vision shared by the vast majority of the British people.

If the Prime Minister's "patriotic alliance" does not share this vision, then it will not be patriotic. It will be more akin to a suicide pact.



## Asia's seismic shift

Aftershocks of the Far Eastern economic earthquake threaten Western prosperity

To assess the likely impact of the Asian crisis on the West, one can start by looking at its effect on one big Western company, Boeing. This year Boeing is planning to make about 180 deliveries to Asian customers, a third of its total production. Most of these deliveries will be made; passenger aircraft are expensive items, hard to cancel at the last minute. Yet Boeing is already facing a slippage: customers are postponing the delivery of firm orders, and seem likely to drop some of their options.

On Monday, Malaysia Airlines announced that it wanted to postpone the delivery of 19 Boeing wide-bodied jets, by up to five years; that order is worth \$3 billion (\$1.9 billion). Cathay has said it has no plans to cancel orders, but it is putting seven Boeing 747 200s up for sale. If the second-hand aircraft market becomes glutted, as has happened before, that will make it more difficult for all airlines to finance new aircraft. Cathay has 16 Boeing options for the period after 1999. If the airline is already selling its Boeings, it may not take up all these options.

The devaluation of most of the Asian currencies means that the aircraft which are purchased will be much more expensive; it is hard to see how Indonesia, the Philippines or Korea will finance the aircraft they have on order. Of course Boeing is just an example; Airbus Industries is exposed to a similar loss of orders.

Many Asian countries are experiencing a general strike among buyers, which has thrown many people out of work already. The response of Asian nations to the devaluation of their currencies and the collapse of their stock markets has been to import much less and to try to export more. Obviously, in these circumstances they cannot export more to each other, so the new export drive has to be directed at the United States and Europe.

Before July, Asian exports were highly competitive with those of Europe and the United States. Asia's margin of cost advantage was being eroded, but it had not disappeared. In the pre-crisis period of the first half of last year, the Asian economies were still growing two to three times faster than their European or American counterparts. Japan, despite slower growth, was the world's most successful exporter. After the devaluations, some of these Asian export costs have been cut by a quarter, a

half or three-quarters. At the same time the panic of the Asian consumers has shut down demand in their domestic markets.

Import cuts do act instantaneously but import prices rise; exports soon start to increase in volume, but they are reduced in price by devaluation. This causes the "J curve" effect, in which receipts for exports fall in the first months after devaluation and then start to rise very steeply. One would expect the Asian countries still to be in the downstroke of the J curve; in fact the shock was so great that Thailand has already recorded four months of trade surpluses. Some commentators have underestimated the remaining strength of the Asian economies, which were indeed the basis for the expansion of the past 20 years. These economies grew because the people worked hard, because savings were high, because new factories were built, because Western technology was transferred to the East, because labour costs and taxes were both low. These positive factors are mostly still present: hard work, high savings, technology transfer, low pay and low taxes continue. Since the devaluations wage costs have fallen sharply in international terms.

The characteristic Asian problems are corruption, over-investment, particularly in property, and excessive reliance on foreign debt. Industrial investment will now be lower than it would have been, which may be no bad thing for the present. Property investments will be cancelled. Corruption may have had a salutary shock, although it remains endemic in many Asian countries. Over-reliance on foreign debt finance has destroyed many businesses; that mistake is unlikely to be repeated. Asian countries will rely less on foreign debt and will probably encourage more foreign equity participation in the next stage of their development. Foreign bankers will not be keen to repeat the mistake of lending in currencies not matched by the borrowers' resources.

The financial structure of Asia has been damaged, and some harm has been done to the world system of credit. After a regional panic of this kind, it is hard to be sure which borrower, or which bank, is still solvent. Off balance sheet liabilities can produce unpleasant surprises. The banking problems go far outside the Asian countries which have devalued. Japanese banks have made large loans in Asia, as have some German banks. To some extent world credit has been threatened.

The big losses which their Asian exposure has caused major American banks were revealed on Tuesday. Chase Manhattan, Citicorp and J.P. Morgan all reported lower earnings than expected. J.P. Morgan had fourth-quarter income of \$2.1 billion as against \$4.9 billion a year earlier.

This had occurred even before J.P. Morgan took the losses on Asian loans, but the bank — which is the third largest in the United States — said it was allocating 60 per cent of its loan-loss reserves to Indonesia, Thailand and South Korea. Citicorp had actually raised earnings in the quarter, but its chairman, John S. Reed, stated that "the Asian turmoil reduced our pre-tax results by about \$250 million"; these results also seem to be due to the exchange-rate movements rather than loan defaults. But loan defaults are bound to occur.

The early official estimates have been that the Asian crisis will have relatively little effect on the economies of Europe and America. This optimism is likely to prove mistaken. The scale of damage must depend to some extent on the speed of the Asian recovery. Asia is volatile, as every Asian market has shown. The most favourable possibility is that Asia will bounce back quickly, that the stock markets will recover, that the currencies will gradually strengthen, and that the Asian investors will get their confidence back. That will be good news for America and Europe. Unfortunately it is rather unlikely to happen. This earthquake has been a big one; it has knocked down important business structures and

put the fear of insolvency into Asian business. Much more likely is a period of continued uncertainty followed by a gradual recovery.

There is likely to be a massive rise in Asia's surplus on the balance of trade. Imports from outside Asia will continue to be very low; as time goes on exports from Asia will rise sharply in volume and eventually in value. Asian employment will again become firmer. As China has not devalued, China and Hong Kong may suffer competitive pressures. The United States and Europe will lose exports and take in imports.

Continental Europe will suffer the worst. The United States and Britain are now close to the limit of their expansion, but in Europe unemployment is already very high, at 12.5 per cent in France and Italy, close to 10 per cent in the former West Germany, and at 20 per cent in eastern Germany and Spain. Europe does not have the high technology of the United States, which gives some American exports a monopoly power.

European businesses such as the mass car producers are much more vulnerable. Japanese technology, which has been borrowed by the Korean car manufacturers, is more than competitive with European firms in this market. Korean costs will now be far lower. In world economic competition, there is uncomfortably little room for the European mass car industry. These pressures may well lead to demands for protection from middle technology industries both in Europe and the United States.

In 1992, Britain went through an economic crisis and was forced out of the European exchange-rate mechanism. Everyone said what a blow that was for Britain, but it showed once again that the British economy had underlying flaws of character. By this year, the pound has risen to DM5 — which worries the Bank of England — and the British economy has flourished in growth and employment relative to that of the Continent. The Asian countries have just gone through a much greater devaluation, combined with stock-market crashes and a collapse of consumer confidence. Devaluation and a tight domestic squeeze is the classic formula for making an economy more competitive. We must now expect the Asian exporters to get up off the canvas and land a heavy blow on the grey stubble of Europe's chin.

William Rees-Mogg

## Grow up, Gordon: Tony won

Magnus Linklater

on the lessons of the Blair-Brown bust-up

on the lessons of the Blair-Brown bust-up

The wounds have been patched up, but the scars are raw; they may take some time to heal; perhaps they never will. The split that has opened up between Prime Minister and Chancellor has been as bizarre and damaging for party and government as anything since the famous war of attrition between George Brown and Harold Wilson in the late 1960s, with this difference — that it came so early in the life of this Government. It was sudden and puzzling, completely unnecessary so far as one can tell. It may tell us something about the damage that can be caused by spin-doctors. It tells us more about Gordon Brown.

It would, after all, have been easy to prevent it all happening in the first place. Mr Brown could have kept Paul Routledge, his prospective biographer, at arm's length during the pre-election period, and in its aftermath. He could, and probably should, have recognised that Mr Routledge is not exactly sympathetic to new Labour, and any close contact with him might well be misinterpreted. He should have made it clear that publication was unwelcome if not discouraged. Even if this failed to neutralise its impact, when news of it broke, in *The Guardian*, one of the Government's least favourite papers, it should have been possible to pop next door, from No. 11 to No. 10 Downing Street, to ensure that the message which went out was clear, agreed and unequivocal: there was no hint of a rift, the rivalry between the two was yesterday's story, there would be no further comment.

Instead, what followed were ten days of leak and counter-leak, a dressing-down in full Cabinet, and the thinly disguised suggestion from No. 10 that the Chancellor was psychologically flawed. The signals it sent out could hardly have been worse. If this was what happened in a supposedly united Cabinet when a trifling embarrassment occurred, what on earth would be the outcome of a genuine disagreement?

Yet none of the hysteria was justified. On serious matters of policy, on welfare reform, the single currency, the management of the economy, there are no major disagreements between Chancellor and Prime Minister. What we have learnt instead is that Mr Brown, he of the instant secondhand suit, is a man of some prose and the tightly-controlled fiscal policy, in fact a human being, perhaps not as remote or emotionless as we have imagined. Like Shylock, he might say: "If you prick us, do we not bleed? And, like Shylock, even so far as to add: "If you wrong us, shall we not revenge?" In dealing with Mr Routledge, he may well have wanted to redress some balance with the man who took the party leadership away from him. I doubt if he intended to inflict permanent damage, far less to undermine the Government.

His failure to win the leadership race undoubtedly caused him anguish. I remember vividly the day he knew he had lost it. As reported in Mr Routledge's book, it was a story in *The Spectator*, which I then edited, which first signalled that Tony Blair was on the road to victory. We had carried out a poll of Scottish Labour MPs, those who might have been considered the bedrock of Mr Brown's support, instead of being united behind him, they were, at best, equivocal. A significant number of those we contacted said that they hoped Mr Brown would stand down for the sake of the party, and thought that Mr Blair would be more likely to win a general election. The headline reflected this.

Not surprisingly, perhaps, he telephoned as much in despair as anger. Why had the headline been so negative? Did I realise the damage this would cause? Later, I learnt that he suspected the hand of Peter Mandelson had been behind it. This was absurd, but I can understand the depth of his disappointment, and the sense of betrayal he must have felt. He has now seen two flattering biographies published about the man who defeated him. It would have required a steady determination on Mr Brown's part to resist the approach of an author offering to redress this balance. He was not as steady as he should have been. Thus, he gave Mr Routledge not one, but four interviews, authorised his family to speak to him, and gave political friends permission to brief the author. He may well have reasoned that Mr Routledge's two previous biographies were sufficiently even-handed to hope that this one would be too.

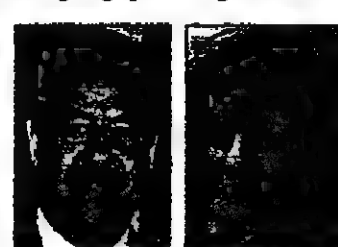
Unwise? In retrospect, yes. But hardly enough to justify the ferocious rumours and counter-rumours that followed publication. The Prime Minister's absence in the Far East may have allowed the spin-doctors full rein, and, at the very least, they must now be ordered to toe the line. But in the end, there is a very straightforward way of resolving this mess — if he did not before — the death of Mr Brown's feelings. The Chancellor, for his part, must realise that any further leaks could end his career at its most promising point. Respect for the first, and restraint on the second, should draw a line under it once and for all. Why bother to keep

## Safety catch

HAS President Saddam Hussein met his match? Emma Nicholson, that game old campaigner who recently took her seat in the Lords, has been invited to Iraq by the sublimely dictatorial talk turkey just as the international crisis heats up. The baroness, a great admirer of Sir Edward Heath who undertook a similar mission, is considering the offer but is worried: she has been warned — by, it is believed, senior security figures — that Saddam wants to kill her. She is weighing up the dangers with two unnamed Labour MPs to make what the smaller prints might term a "mercy mission". Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne, as we should now style her, is a compassionate sort who has had to survive sniping of a different kind after defecting from the Tories to the Liberal Democrats. Unlike many keen talkers, she has demonstrated her colours by adopting an Iraqi marsh Arab disguise for Saddam's napalm, and campaigns for the beleaguered Kurds of northern Iraq. And this is why she fears Saddam's peculiar invitation may be a trap.

I can think of a few of her erstwhile colleagues who might not wish her a safe passage, but I urge her to think most carefully.

SO FRIENDLY has Tony Blair become with the Queen (indeed, some might say informal), that the Prime Minister has acquired a



At home: Saddam, Nicholson

memory of another touchy-feely former premier: Paul Keating.

### Bridge work

MY LATEST bulletin on the travails of hard-up Tory MPs concerns Robin Squire, former Education Minister. The post of general manager for the Dolphin Square residential complex, salary £30,000, seemed an easy route



elled in the title "minister for school discipline". The management of the MP-infested Pinco estate begged to differ: "I was among many interviewed but I was not appointed. It means I have more time to play bridge," ventures Squire. Happily, if he should pile up gambling debts, he has just landed a consultancy job.

GEOFFREY ROBINSON has found some chums more in keeping with his untapped wealth. The Paymaster General will give the keynote speech at the fifth annual Adam Smith Institute Conference on the Private Finance Initiative in February. The ASI is delighted. "Geoffrey is very forward thinking. In two years' business will run half the NHS," says its president, Madsen Pirie. One Labour MP who won't be shelling out the £938

free-market mantra is Paul Flynn. "It is extraordinary for a Labour minister. It's like Thatcher addressing miners' pickets. You have really depressed me."

### Arches rivals

A VICTORY has at last been chalked up on the blackened scoreboard of William Hague: he has won a long campaign to counter pigeon-squatter in his York constituency. Railtrack and Hambleton District Council have bickered over who should stop pigeons roosting in arches of Romanby's railway



bridges, loosing their voluminous droppings on pedestrians. Enter Hague, who has boldly ordered Railtrack to put its hands in its well-fleeced pockets.

It has forked out £11,000 to line the arches with nets to stop the pigeons settling. "This is a gesture of goodwill," says a Railtrack spokesman. "There is no way we will go on maintaining someone else's property." Well done William.

CLIENTS keen to discuss the cost of divorce with their lawyers at Mishcon de Roy's are growing nervous due to the snappers lurking outside. One photographer has just been attacked by a grand dame shouting: "Stop! If those shots are used, he will find out."

### Bali high

A PECULIAR meeting of minds is in prospect if the Prince of Wales accepts an invitation from the Prince of Bali and his new wife, Mariamne, to join them in a session of yoga flying. Prince Ratu will visit Britain in March to meet his in-laws, the Royals of Leogbhorough, whose 22-year-old daughter sealed her union last month with the 42-year-old Prince she met in a Santa Fe bar. Mariamne, an art student and model, has converted to Bud-



Royal bride: Mariamne

dhism session with Prince Charles is being sought by that ER guru Naeef Clifford, hired by the King of Bali to advance his son's cause through English society. "The Prince is keen to meet Charles while he is here to discuss Eastern philosophy and ideals," explains Clifford, straying impressively from his normal brief.





# PATRIOTIC EUROPEANS

Blair should cajole but not pretend

Much of Tony Blair's grand set speech at The Hague this week will be construed by European governments — including Germany as well as France — as an assault from what he called "the radical centre" on the most basic tenets of social democracy. On social policy, on employment and free markets, on the "manifest absurdity" of the common agricultural policy and on enlargement of the European Union, this was a speech that, for all its praise of "active government", differed little in substance from the European policies of the previous British Government.

Mr Blair wants to build a European consensus around what he sees as "seven principles" to "reform the European social model, not play around with it". To look for such a consensus is one thing; to pretend that one exists is another. However much Mr Blair's rhetoric may seek to present his ideas as a new "third way" between laissez faire and corporatism, his "seven principles" of reform are a world away from the kinds of social intervention practised in France, Italy or even Helmut Kohl's subsidy-soaked Germany. The struggle to qualify for monetary union has imposed fiscal disciplines that may or may not prove durable; but in few countries are they being matched by serious welfare reforms, let alone labour market liberalisation; state aids to companies, as Mr Blair himself remarked, are becoming more not less of a problem.

Mr Blair's assertion that a new mood is sweeping Europe thus bears an uncomfortably close resemblance to John Major's belief that Britain was "winning the arguments" on European integration. The Prime Minister's European landscape has all the grandeur, and the deceptively rose tints, of a pastoral allegory by Claude.

Optimism bordering on naivety may, in Mr Blair's view, be necessary rhetorical weapons in the battle for European reform. There can be no such excuse for his claim of

a "remarkable shift" in new Labour's Britain to "constructive engagement with Europe". When Mr Blair claims that "the old political barriers" in this country have given way to "a patriotic alliance in favour of Britain's central place in Europe", his purpose may be purely to create more trouble for William Hague. But if this is a genuine invitation to form a cross-party "pro-European" platform, it should be treated with intense suspicion. This Government has so far pursued a successful strategy of lulling people to sleep on European policies, beginning with EMU. There is no merit in stifling debate on questions of such vital national interest.

Robin Cook correctly observed yesterday that in other European countries, there is a national consensus on Europe that does not exist in Britain. Mr Blair should neither pretend otherwise, nor wish it otherwise. Thoughtful Europeans value and envy the fact that, precisely because of the strong doubts in this country about the pace and direction of European integration, debates that ought, in Europe's interest, to be joined have not been swept out of public view by political elites as they have been elsewhere.

To probe and criticise policy directions that may be good neither for Britain nor for the EU as a whole is not, as Mr Blair suggests, to be guilty of "narrow chauvinism"; on the contrary, it is a European responsibility. It is also a democratic necessity. EU policies are inextricably part of domestic politics. Disagreement should no more stop at the water's edge than it should stop north of Watford. Mr Blair believes that EMU "can make sense"; William Hague argues on the page opposite that it could pose very serious risks not just to the sovereignty of the United Kingdom, but to the political stability of the whole of Europe. To bury this, the most vitally consequential of policy debates, would be as impatience as it is politically absurd.

# MEANS AND ENDS

Welfare reform and independent taxation do not easily mix

Much of the publicity that accompanied the policy options on welfare reform has focused on whether the middle classes — especially middle class women — would revolt if their entitlement to certain state benefits were eliminated. This may not be the source of the Government's main discomfort. Many concede that the present system offers unnecessary rewards to the relatively rich while failing to qualify poverty. Those sympathies will be tested not only by income levels but the right to individual benefit.

The connection between welfare reform and the tax system has been largely unacknowledged and underestimated. The widely respected "Green Budget" released by the Institute for Fiscal Studies yesterday suggests that Gordon Brown will introduce the Working Families Tax Credit — BASED ON THE AMERICAN EARNED INCOME TAX CREDIT — in his budget. This involves a tax credit to the working poor, allied to family size, that is slowly withdrawn as income increases. At the other end of the spectrum, Harriet Harman is exploring an "affluence test", the exclusion of the rich from some or all of child benefit and maternity payments.

To many, probably a majority, both ideas will seem persuasive. The Working Families Tax Credit would place an overdue emphasis on work rather than benefits that create a dependency culture. Although it has had serious administrative difficulties in the United States, it has also played an important part in the impressive employment levels associated with the American economy. The affluence test offers a route by which those who can do without state support can be eased out of its structure. This can be done without the detested,

intrusive, means-testing of the poor. Neither of these notions can function without a measure of household income. Without that, absurd anomalies would be invited.

A family in which one member earned more than £100,000 per annum and the other £3,000 for part-time employment would see the second person eligible for a tax credit to help them with their "hardship". Another family, where each partner worked for £10,000 might receive almost nothing. Similarly, an affluence test "cushion" be credibly applied to child benefit if the sole yardstick of wealth is whether a woman is a top-rate tax payer.

Independent taxation of men and women, introduced in 1990 at the behest of Nigel Lawson, could be scrapped to tackle these problems. That would be extremely unpopular in many quarters. The reform has been properly seen as a landmark achievement for women. There are also situations when it is essential that a woman keeps her financial affairs private from her husband.

This is an awkward circle to square. Any change to the tax system should follow certain criteria. The move must not be an excuse to increase individual levels of taxation as well as reduce entitlement to benefits. Tax forms should still be filed individually. There should be no financial disadvantage to marriage rather than cohabitation. A substantial degree of privacy and confidentiality must be provided. If the Government acts with sensitivity then it should be possible to find a formula that allows the Working Families Tax Credit and affluence test to be developed. If not, Mr Blair may find that the independent taxation issue undermines his admirable ambitions.

# IN VICTORY, MAGNANIMITY?

A moment for suitably Churchillian grace from Mr Clark

Albany 21st January 1997.  
Der Tag has arrived, victory is mine — total, crushing, sweet. My defeat of "Hitler" Hastings is as complete as the Allies in 1945, and as just. The Evening Standard's editor and his creature Bradshaw may have fancied themselves latter-day Alexander Pops and me their Sporus, a political dilettante suitable for satire, but they are the butterflies broken upon the wheel of my triumphal chariot. I have not always had occasion to thank judges for their understanding. When that cuckold Harkness and his brood of harpies attempted to make capital out of my, perhaps overly classical, approach to keeping it in the family I was agast. Surely, a man wise enough to grace the bench should have realised that the stallion can have his way with mare and foal? But my opinion of the judiciary is a quite different now. Mr Justice Lightman, a prince of his profession, has seen how cruelly my name and reputation were taken in vain by reptiles trying to raise a cheap laugh. Not so cheap now, I fancy.

And yet, what was it Winston used to say? I'm sure Soames was right when he repeated his grandfather's dictum over a celebratory mug of Pilsener at Brook's — "in victory, magnanimity". Perhaps it would be better if my settlement was not another Versailles. Crushing reparations are too much to ask. Might it not be more gentlemanly to hope that the judge does not impose another Carthaginian peace with salt sown on the razed ground of the Standard's offices?

After all, I sought only to ensure that no one would ever mistake Bradshaw's undergraduate prose for my own. It was insupportable that his squibs should be confused with my rapier simply because he took my name and, admittedly rather dashing, profile in vain. It was as though Bridget Jones's diary were given another dustjacket and taken for Jane Austen's. It did not need an aesthetic judgment as fine as my dear papa's to tell the difference.

But now that my honour is satisfied, do I really need the money? Saltwood needs damp-proofing. Yet I may need insulation myself from accusations that I have put lace before lustre, and have acted in a manner which is almost, though, Archeresque.

I would not want to establish too forbidding a precedent. With this Government composed almost entirely of Jock puritans and Blair, one of nature's milk monitors, trying to be the nation's team vicar, our newspapers should not become shorn of their satirical edge. Even The Times has its licensed wits now, my old fog Howard and that other, well, funnyman Parris. Perhaps I might hope Mr Justice Lightman is gentle with Hastings and Bradshaw. A nominal sum might be sufficient. Would it be interfering to hint as much to Hailsham at the Beefsteak and hope the message gets through? And if they found out, in due course, that I had spared them, might they not think me a kindly Caesar? The laurels are mine. I should wear them lightly.

# Time for warrant to arrest Saddam

From the Director of the UN Association of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Sir, The UNA has repeatedly urged the Government to get the UN Security Council to set out a list of exactly what Saddam Hussein and his Government still need to do in order to bring the sanctions regime to an end.

We would like to see a renewed discussion between the Security Council and the Iraqis which would specify a list of and timetable for all the sites which the UN arms inspectors (UNSCOM) must visit and would link step-by-step compliance to a phased lifting of the sanctions, which continue dramatically and seriously to hurt the broad mass of the population of Iraq.

Should the Iraqi Government refuse to enter into such discussions, or renege on decisions agreed at them, then the UN Security Council would need to consider alternative measures. In the meantime, we would oppose any further military action and are certainly of the view that any such move could not be undertaken without a fresh mandate from the Council.

Continuing reports suggest that the Iraqi Government has engaged in human experiments while testing biological and chemical weapons. We all know of the Iraqis' use of chemical weapons, of the dispatch of missiles to Tel Aviv during the Gulf War and of a brutal, flagrant and sustained abuse of human rights in a whole variety of ways within Iraq and in occupied Kuwait.

The question that now needs to be asked is whether the Security Council should consider indicting Saddam Hussein on charges of crimes against humanity and issuing a warrant for his arrest. Although his capture could not immediately be assured, nevertheless, as in Bosnia — his movements would be further restrained. One of the UN's special tribunals could have its mandate extended to cover Iraq.

Yours sincerely,  
MALCOLM HARPER, Director,  
United Nations Association of Great Britain and Northern Ireland,  
3 Whitehall Court, SW1A 2EL,  
January 20.

# Cook's private life

From Mrs A. A. Whitehead

Sir, A number of your correspondents (letters, January 15) disagree with Peter Riddell ("Britain remains a nation apart", January 12) that Mr Robin Cook remains a suitable and credible Foreign Secretary. I, in turn, disagree with them.

Mr Cook's behaviour hardly seems to me to fall into Father James Walsh's saccharine category of "wholesale abandonment of personal morality". Many of us married in youthful good faith and immaturity, to learn of our mistakes a generation later: these experiences have not prevented us from developing into responsible adults. We should not be disbarred from holding public office.

How many more are there in the House privately reneging on their marriage vows, carrying out a dishonourable deceit known only to themselves and their partners? If the Almighty, with one blow, were to disallow all such transgressors, would either House be able to raise a football team or a rowing eight? We would lose one party leader and be denied the presence of a future monarch.

And if he aimed a similar blow at our churches, how many congregations would turn up on a Sunday to find no clergyman in attendance?

Yours sincerely,  
A. A. WHITEHEAD,  
28 School Street,  
Pudsey, West Yorkshire LS28 8PN,  
January 15.

# Japanese apology

From Lieutenant-Colonel Pat Spooner (ret)

Sir, I strongly endorse Captain Hugo Bracken's letter of January 19 (see also letter, January 21). The 1951 San Francisco treaty was an act of deliberate appeasement by the Americans, with the connivance of the British, to prevent Japan from being enticed into the Soviet camp and to encourage a pro-Western attitude amongst the Japanese leadership.

As a result of this treaty, however, not only were former POWs who had suffered unimaginable hardships at the hands of their captors prevented from seeking proper compensation, but more than 500 Japanese war criminals, convicted of heinous atrocities against these same hapless captives, were quietly and surreptitiously released before the end of the 1950s.

It was not until 1995 that this act of covert perfidy (in the guise of "diplomatic expediency") on the part of HMG was revealed through the Public Records Office at Kew Gardens.

As the senior British staff officer responsible for all war crimes investigations in South-East Asia (1945-46) I can vouch for the fact that more than 600 people, including 226 British officers in that area alone, had spent over two years in bringing these war criminals to justice.

Yours sincerely,  
PAT SPOONER,  
22 Broadwater Rise,  
Guildford, Surrey GU1 2LA,  
January 20.

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

# Have music and art been sent to the bottom of the class?

From Sir Simon Rattle

Sir, Richard Morrison ("Culture sent to bottom of the class", Arts, January 16) is of course right. The crisis in arts funding, serious and potentially crippling though it is, pales beside what is being done to the arts in the name of education.

For those of us in the arts who had longed for a new Government, who had taken Labour's pre-election pledge to "find ways to arrest the decline of music in schools" at face value, the removal of music and art from the primary school curriculum is a devastating blow.

At a time when recent research has proved the educational benefits of music over a range of subjects from maths to languages, even apart from its extraordinary effects on difficult or antisocial children, why is the most effective form of access to be denied?

It is not only a matter of damage to the future musicians of this country, although the recent decline is well-documented, particularly among primary children. Music should be every one's birthright, and understanding needs to be fostered from an early age.

Musical ability often seems to be in inverse proportion to wealth or social status: a large proportion of both our most valued performers and listeners would never have discovered the power of music without it being placed in front of them at school. Are the arts to be restricted to those who can pay, as was the case earlier in our century?

It seems ironic that the music profession, which fought tirelessly with the last Government over what form the music curriculum should take, must now take on their successors to protect its very existence. We had believed that the worst was over — let us hope that we were right, and that the Government will remember that the arts are for all, not just a privileged minority.

Yours faithfully,  
SIMON RATTLE  
(Music Director),  
City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra,  
Paradise Place, Birmingham B3 3RP,  
January 21.

From the Director of the RSA

Sir, As Richard Morrison correctly says, we are in danger of creating a nation of philistines. In 1995 the RSA published a report warning that many

schools were no longer able to offer pupils a wide-ranging, fulfilling experience of the arts and since then we have been campaigning, through our programme *The Arts Matter*, to secure a well resourced place for the arts in the National Curriculum.

So what can we expect now, following David Blunkett's proposals to drastically slim down the primary school curriculum (report and leading article, January 14)? What has happened to Tony Blair's pre-election commitment that "the arts have for too long remained outside the mainstream — just an optional extra — and that their huge potential has been unrecognised by government"? Surely the arts have a key role to play in helping the Government deliver on its literacy and numeracy targets for primary schools.

We are working on a number of fronts to prove that the arts are a vital part of all our lives and essential to every child's entitlement at school. We wonder how the Qualification and Curriculum Authority's requirement to promote the "spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical" development of pupils will have a hope of being realised without the arts to help deliver it.

Yours sincerely,  
PENNY EGAN,  
Director,  
Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufacture & Commerce,  
8 John Adam Street, WC2N 6EZ,  
January 20.

From the Secretary of State for Education and Employment

Sir, Richard Morrison unjustly criticises our decision to introduce greater flexibility within the primary school curriculum in order to allow a stronger focus on the basics. As your leading article of January 14 pointed out, this is something which has been widely welcomed by parents and teachers.

Mr Morrison maintains that the announcement means that art, music and other national curriculum subjects will "no longer have an official place in primary schools". The fact is that no school will be able to drop any of these subjects. I made it clear on Tuesday that schools would not only be expected to continue teaching them but that they would still have to deliver a broad and balanced curriculum. While teachers will not have to follow

every aspect of the national curriculum orders, they will be expected to exercise a greater degree of professional responsibility.

I also intend in the near future to say more about how we will develop creativity within our education system, which I regard as an important part of every child's development.

Yours faithfully,  
DAVID BLUNKETT,  
Department for Education and Employment,  
Sanctuary Buildings,  
Great Smith Street,  
Westminster, SW1P 3BT,  
January 16.

From the Principal of the Voices Foundation

Sir, There was a time in Europe when the four pillars of education were astronomy, arithmetic, geometry and music. Compare this with modern educational emphasis: the vocational, the technological and the academic, all within the context of a screen-dominated age. The only three areas in which child prodigy occurs are mathematics, music and chess. These disciplines are fundamental to the human intellect and psyche.

Within our modern context, it is increasingly essential to develop in young children (under the age of 12) sensitivity, aesthetic awareness, tolerance and, above all, the ability to listen to others and to think independently.

Of course, literacy and numeracy are essential foundations, and standards must be improved. But by marginalising the humanities we are rendering our primary school children less able to develop into balanced, educated human beings.

High-quality music education need not be a burden on an overloaded curriculum. Music helps with linguistic and mathematical skills, can help to develop discipline and can raise self-esteem — it is not exclusively for the talented or academically able.

However, we must not view music purely in a utilitarian light. It must be promoted and upheld for what it can uniquely bring to the young.

Yours faithfully,  
SUSAN DIGBY, Principal,  
The Voices Foundation,  
The Poets' House,  
21 Earls Court Square, SW5 9BY,  
January 19.

# Cairngorms railway

From the Policy Officer, WWF Scotland

Sir, Ronnie Fair (supplement, "Ticket to Scotland", January 9) correctly states that the "controversial" funicular railway development scheme for the Cairngorms has secured £2.7 million of European money. He omits to mention, however, that this funding is dependent on final approval by the European Commission and that the RSPB are challenging the legality of the development approval in the High Court in Edinburgh, due to reconvene in April.

The Cairngorms are the finest area for wildlife in the UK. The mountains range from the finest remnants of ancient Caledonian pine forest to the largest area of sub-Arctic wilderness to be found in our crowded island and form a home to eagle, ptarmigan, snow bunting, dotterel, otter and pine marten.

The proposed funicular railway would involve blasting a cut-and-cover tunnel onto the plateau at over 3,000 feet — an inappropriate form of development for such a wild place. We are challenging it in court because we believe it also contravenes European nature conservation law.

The committee overseeing the use of the EU funds on the site has frequently expressed concerns over the viability and value for money of the project as currently conceived, and the neighbouring council, Aberdeenshire, recently voted to condemn the Government for approving the funicular, on the grounds that other ski areas will be threatened by unfair competition. On December 11 it was revealed in a parliamentary answer that the Secretary of State for Scotland had received 184 letters supporting the development and 2,873 letters against.

Skiers and taxpayers be warned, all is not well on Cairn Gorm.

Sincerely,  
MARTIN MATTHEWS,  
Policy Officer, WWF Scotland,  
8 The Square, Aberfeldy,  
Perthshire PH14 2DD.

# Cast aside

From Miss Gertrud Seidmann

Sir, Two weeks ago I was mildly astonished to see the cast list provided in *Vision* (January 3) for the Radio 3 *Boris Godunov* from the Metropolitan Opera: it consisted of four female singers. The main roles are, of course Boris (bass), Shulsky (tenor), Simon (tenor) and Dimitri (tenor).

Last Saturday's *Vision* did it again: for *The Rake's Progress* you gave us one soprano and two mezzos: no Rake, no Nick Shadow, no Auctioneer. The superb Samuel Ramey, as Boris and as Nick Shadow, sang magnificently in both productions.

Is this a dastardly feminist plot? Yours truly,  
GERTRUD SEIDMANN,  
22 Victoria Road, Oxford OX2 7QD,  
January 20.

# A site for radar

From Sir Bernard Lovell, FRS

Sir, Your obituary notice of Robert Sutton (January 14) rightly gives high praise to his development of the "sub-tube" which formed a vital component of the microwave radar systems developed in 1940. This, plus the references in your letters of January 7 and 12 to the emergency move in 1942 of the Telecommunications Research Establishment from Swansage to Malvern College, leads me to deplore the lack of any memorial on the Dorset coast, where these historic developments occurred.

The first radar echo from an aircraft using the highly secret cavity magnetron was obtained from a cliff site at North Matravers, four miles west of Swanage, in mid-August 1940. The consequences for all three Services were profound.

The only memorial is a vaguely worded plaque on the coastguard hut, some distance from the site of the main establishment (now restored to

farmland). When the Luftwaffe began attacking this exposed site in September 1940, these researches were moved to the nearby former school at Leeson House in Langton Matravers.

From remote-located stables overlooking the sea, the ability of this equipment to detect a submarine (*HMS Uck*) in Swanage Bay was demonstrated to the Naval Staff that November. The rapid development of this ground equipment for RAF Coastal Command and for the naval corvettes had a critical impact on the U-boat warfare in the North Atlantic.

A centre for the history of defence electronics has recently been established in the University of Bourne-mouth. With that liaison, I hope that the relevant authorities in Dorset will find an appropriate means of marking these sites for posterity.

Yours faithfully,  
BERNARD LOVELL,  
Nuffield Radio Astronomy Laboratories,  
Jodrell Bank, Macclesfield SK10 9DN,  
January 14.

# Traffic reduction

From Mr Roger Higman

Sir, Mr Robert Phillipson (letter, January 13) argues that the traffic cuts proposed in the Road Traffic Reduction (UK Targets) Bill "sound modest but are not", on the grounds that government forecasts say traffic levels will rise over the next 30 years. In fact, it is because the Bill largely involves stopping traffic growth which has yet to occur that its targets are so easy to achieve.

If the Bill's targets are met, nine out of ten current car journeys will still be made by car in 2010, and car use will be as high as it was in 1987. However, cutting traffic by this amount will cut congestion and pollution by far more.

Over 400 MPs have given their backing to the Bill, which is due to be debated in the Commons on January 30. They recognise that millions of people up and down the country are sick and tired of congestion and pollution, but that — as today's leading article points out — they will not change their behaviour until the Government changes its policies.

Yours sincerely,  
ROGER HIGMAN,  
(Senior Campaigner,  
Atmosphere and Transport),  
Friends of the Earth,  
26-28 Underwood Street, N1 2JQ,  
January 21.

# God and the Internet

From Mr S. W. Yorke

Sir, If a biblical description is to be applied to the Internet (report, January 20; letter, January 21) surely the Tower of Babel would be more accurate than the mind of God.

Yours faithfully,  
S. YORKE,  
Lower Wild Farm,  
Alresford, Hampshire SO24 9RX.

# Second chamber

From Mr Bill Kearns

Sir, You report (January 12) the Prime Minister on reform of the House of Lords as saying that the second stage of the reform would involve the introduction of a democratic second chamber, and then saying that there was a case for transforming some of the existing hereditary peers into nominated members who would, as life peers can at the moment, participate and vote in the second chamber.

The two statements are mutually exclusive. There is nothing democratic about a second chamber composed in part of non-elected regurgitated hereditary peers.

Yours sincerely,  
BILL KEARNS,  
11 Court Royal Mews,  
Northlands Road,  
Southampton, Hampshire SO15 2TU,  
January 12.

# Dieting as a sin

From Mr Harry A. Barrington

Sir, The idea that theology might justify viewing dieting as a sin (report, January 19) is confirmed by the memory of my mother, who nearly 70 years ago insisted that "God would not be pleased" if I did not eat my greens.

On the other hand, she on occasions insisted that Jesus would be happy if I stopped asking for a second helping of bread and butter pudding.

Yours sincerely,  
H. A. BARRINGTON,  
30 Fairmile Avenue,  
Cobham, Surrey KT11 2JB,  
January 20.

Letters should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be faxed to 0171-782-5046. e-mail to: letters@the-times.co.uk















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THURSDAY JANUARY 22 1998

## High street's poor Christmas may halt rate rise

BY ALASDAIR MURRAY  
ECONOMICS CORRESPONDENT

HIGH STREET sales unexpectedly fell over the Christmas period leaving the Bank of England facing a major interest rate dilemma when it meets early next month. Retail sales declined 0.1 per cent last month compared with November, taking the annual rate of growth to 5.3 per cent — well below City forecasts of about 5.9 per cent.

a-half per cent as dealers concluded that chances of an interest rate rise next month are receding. The pound closed down at DM2.9747 and slipped 0.7 points on its trade-weighted index to 104.5. The stock

market also endured an uncomfortable day unsettled by worries over earnings growth and renewed market turbulence in Asia. The FTSE 100 index closed down 5.9 points at 5,223.3. The poor Christmas performance

in the high street was blamed on a 20 per cent dip in sales of computer and photographic equipment compared with December last year. Clothes sales also suffered. Economists were divided on whether the

data would be sufficient to persuade the Bank not to raise rates. Andrew Cates, UK economist at UBS, said: "Fourth-quarter GDP looks set to be weaker than previously forecast by the Bank which decreases the probability of another rate rise." But Richard Riley, UK economist at ABN-AMRO Hoare Govett, said the Bank was more likely to be moved by the rise in average earnings and other signs of tightening in the labour market.

Separate data from the Engineering Employers' Federation revealed that export orders fell for the fourth consecutive quarter but strong domestic demand enabled order books to show overall growth.

Commentary, page 25

## Brown accused of building £150bn 'war chest'

GORDON BROWN was yesterday accused of building a pre-election "war chest" worth up to £150 billion after a report by a leading economics think-tank showed that the Government is on course to achieve a healthy budget surplus (Alasdair Murray writes).

The Institute for Fiscal Studies/Goldman Sachs Green Budget forecasts that tax rises will ensure the Chancellor can increase public spending in real terms by as much as 3 per cent later in the Parliament without endangering the public finances. David Watson, UK economist at Goldman Sachs, added that Mr Brown could safely cut taxes by up to £3 billion in the Budget in March.

The figures were seized upon by Malcolm Bruce, the Liberal Democrat Treasury spokesman, who claimed the Chancellor was adopting a "tax now, spend later strategy" and could have an extra £150 billion to spend over the next five years. The Green Budget report also expects the Bank of England to miss the inflation target of 2.5 per cent in the next two years. Underlying inflation, which excludes mortgage interest payments, will rise from 3 per cent this year to 3.4 per cent in 1999.

## Menzies to put its 450 shops up for sale

By DOMINIC WALSH

JOHN MENZIES will today signal its intention to withdraw from the high street after 165 years to focus on becoming a force in distribution.

The move, to be announced with the Edinburgh group's interim results this morning, effectively puts a "for sale" sign over the group's 450 shops.

Menzies' decision to exit from retailing comes in the wake of mounting speculation among its 3,500-strong workforce of impending closures and job losses. A statement two days ago that there were "no plans for any significant store closures or redundancies" merely heightened fears.

Industry sources said the group was expected to seek an early sale of its 232 Menzies newsagents and bookshops. High street rivals Forbuys and Martins were cited as potential buyers. If the chain is broken up, fashion chains such as Next and New Look are likely to be interested in some of its prime sites.

The loss-making Early Learning Centre (ELC) business, which has doubled in size to 219 sites since it was acquired by Menzies in 1985, may not be sold until the new management team has had a chance to put it on a more solid footing. Menzies tried to sell ELC a year ago but was forced to take it off the market after failing to attract high enough offers.

Today's interim results are expected to show a decline in group pre-tax profits from £2.6 million to about £1 million, with retail losses as much as 50 per cent higher than the £6.2 million loss this time last year. However distribution is expected to show strong growth and full-year profits should be static at about £3 million.

The architect of the changes at Menzies is David Mackay, who was appointed managing

director then chief executive last year. Sources say that Mr Mackay, who has been with the company since 1964, decided retail had no future after spending last year "going through the business with a fine-tooth comb". Last month he decided to shut its Princes Street store, a flagship since it opened in 1833, and he recently had the group reclassified on the Stock Exchange as a distributor.

Today, he will outline his strategy for developing Menzies as a leading player in distribution. It is already the second-biggest newspaper wholesaler after WH Smith, and has a freight handling business and is the sole UK distributor for Nintendo 64, which had booming sales over Christmas.

The company is also one of the main airport cargo handlers and is close to a deal with Lufthansa, the German airline, that will give it an entry into baggage handling. Lufthansa is considered a key to its plans as it is part of the Star Alliance, giving Menzies access to Air Canada, SAS, Thai Airways and Varig of Brazil.

Mr Mackay's change of direction comes in the wake of the inexorable rise of the supermarket chains such as Tesco and Asda, a big factor in WH Smith's recent woes. Increasingly, supermarkets are seen as a convenient one-stop shop for newspapers, magazines, greetings cards and music as well as confectionery and cigarettes. Clive Vaughan, research manager at Verdict, the retail consultancy, said: "The product offer is increasingly being replicated in grocery supermarkets and there is less and less reason for people to visit Menzies and Smiths."

Commentary, page 25



David Farrar, chief executive of Allied Colloids, is delighted with the takeover by Ciba, which will help to accelerate his company's growth

## Ciba wins control of Allied Colloids

By PAUL DURMAN

CIBA Specialty Chemicals, the Swiss group, won the battle for Allied Colloids yesterday, outbidding Hercules of the US with a recommended 205p-a-share offer that valued the Bradford chemicals company at £1.42 billion.

Hercules conceded defeat within 40 minutes of Ciba's lunchtime bid, allow-

ing its 195p-a-share offer to lapse. Hercules said raising its bid for a third time would mean that "the risk of delivering meaningful value to Hercules shareholders from the purchase becomes intolerable".

Allied Colloids will form a new division within Ciba, centred around the water-based technology that provides chemicals for fast-growing areas

in paper-making and pollution control. It will continue to be run from Bradford and David Farrar, its chief executive, will remain as its head.

Mr Farrar said Ciba had said there will be no job losses among the Colloids workforce. He said: "We are delighted. Their global reach will accelerate our growth."

Rolf Meyer, Ciba's chairman, said

Ciba was able to justify such a high offer — 26 times Allied Colloids' forecast earnings — because low Swiss interest rates reduced its cost of capital to only 7 per cent.

Ciba admitted that the purchase will reduce its earnings this year, and some analysts believe that it has overpaid.

Temps, page 26

## Slowdown in mortgage lending

MORTGAGE lending slowed at the end of last year, reinforcing fears that the five rises in base rates since the election have taken their toll on the housing market (Susan Emmett writes).

The Building Societies Association said net advances fell to £539 million in December from £825 million in November. Data from the British Bankers' Association (BBA) also pointed to a slowdown, with net lending rising £677 million compared with over £700 million in each of the previous two months.

In contrast, consumer credit rose strongly by £650 million compared with rises of £550 million in the previous two months.

December is traditionally a slow month for mortgage lenders but the BBA said the figures had been moderated by homeowners making payments before the end of the year to benefit from lower repayments in 1998.

Commentary, page 25

## Robinson willing to hear criticism of Isa proposals

By ANNE ASHWORTH

GEOFFREY ROBINSON, the Paymaster General, yesterday broke his silence on the individual savings account, signalling his willingness to listen to the widespread criticisms of the scheme.

There now appears to be the possibility of change to the proposals for the new account, the Government's replacement for personal equity plans (Peps) and tax exempt special savings accounts. This new spirit of openness came as the Institute for Fiscal Studies, the independent think tank, concluded that there was little incentive to put in more than £1,000-a-month draw.

In a speech to fund managers in Edinburgh, Mr Robinson explained the thinking behind the £50,000 lifetime limit for contributions, the

single most controversial element of the scheme. He said that it was necessary to "rebalance the benefits of tax relief". He added that it would cover 95 per cent of all new mortgages in the UK and nearly all mortgages in the Scotland. A couple would between them be able to repay a £250,000 loan.

A conciliatory Mr Robinson urged the audience to make their views known and to use the opportunity for consultation. Submissions must be received by January 31.

Adrian Coles, director general of the Building Societies Association, said that he was "encouraged". Robert Ballour of Brewin Dolphin Bell Lawrie, and chairman of the Pep Managers Association, also felt that the Treasury seemed to be listening to representations.

Commentary, page 25

## MacLaurin to captain Vodafone

By JON ASHWORTH

LORD MACLAURIN, the former Tesco chief brought in a year ago to save the cause of English cricket, has been named chairman-elect of Vodafone Group, the mobile phone company that pays the England team's bills.

He succeeds Sir Ernest Harrison, more a racing man himself, who retires from the board at the Vodafone annual meeting in July. With Vodafone's chief executive, Chris Gent, a confessed cricketing enthusiast, one can safely predict the topic of conversation in the Vodafone boardroom.

Lord MacLaurin, 60, joined Vodafone as a non-executive director in January 1997, shortly before his ap-

pointment as chairman of the England and Wales Cricket Board. Soon afterwards, Vodafone announced that it was to spend £13 million over five years promoting English cricket at all levels, including the sponsorship of the England team. The company insists the events were unconnected.

Lord MacLaurin set about "doing a Tesco" on cricket, applying his undoubted business skills in a bid to pep up the game. His proposals for a two division system went down as well as a banger in bad light.

Vodafone's name will be displayed prominently during the forthcoming cricket season, although not during the imminent First Test in Jamaica, where the honour goes to Cable & Wireless.

Lord MacLaurin has long excelled at sport. His love of cricket brought him together with Jack Cohen, the "pile-it-high" Tesco founder, who gave him a job with the company. Lord MacLaurin bowed out as chairman of Tesco last July.

If Sir Ernest has any qualms about the way Vodafone is going, he is keeping them to himself. Associates say he is not particularly keen on cricket, reserving his enthusiasm for football — he supports Arsenal — and for the Derby, which Vodafone sponsors. Now 71, he remains chairman and chief executive of Racal Electronics, which he joined in the 1950s as company secretary. Vodafone was spun-off from Racal in 1991.



MacLaurin: excelled at sport

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# Doubts grow over SB's £75bn American deal

By OLIVER AUGUST  
IN NEW YORK  
AND PAUL DURMAN

DISPUTES over valuations and the threat of a culture clash are two of the obstacles standing in the way of the proposed £75 billion merger of SmithKline Beecham and American Home Products.

Analysts believe AHP wants "a merger of equals". Its sales and profits are slightly larger than SmithKline Beecham's, but are growing more slowly. Furthermore, SB's stock market value has overtaken AHP's in recent months, partly because of a litigation threat faced by the US company.

with Merrill Lynch in London, suggested that AHP may be reluctant to agree to a deal that gives its shareholders less than 50 per cent of the enlarged group.

Commentators have suggested that SmithKline Beecham and AHP would avoid the cultural problems that dogged the creation of Pharmacia & Upjohn in a Swedish/American merger. Although SmithKline Beecham is British-based, half the group's sales are in the US, the world's largest healthcare

marketing company. It's more free-wheeling, more open, more touchy-feely. Financially, it looks good operationally, it's not that clear. Regulators are expected to force a merged group to offload some drugs for fear that it would otherwise dominate markets. AHP's portfolio overlaps with important SmithKline Beecham drugs, including Relafen (a pain treatment) and Teveton (for high blood pressure).

Mark Becker, of JP Morgan in London, remains enthusiastic about what he calls "possibly a deal made in heaven". He suggests that annual savings could reach \$2.7 billion. Almost \$1.9 billion of them would come from reduced administration and sales costs.

## Camdessus intervenes as rupiah slumps 15%

By ALASDAIR MURRAY, ECONOMICS CORRESPONDENT

INDONESIA's currency slumped more than 15 per cent yesterday as fears over debt levels and political instability in the country sparked another major sell-off.

The rupiah's latest decline caught other Asian currencies in its wake and forced Michel Camdessus, managing director of the International Monetary Fund, to intervene in an attempt to soothe market fears.

Mr Camdessus said the rupiah was now "significantly undervalued" and expressed confidence that the IMF's \$43 billion rescue package and reform programme would help to restore confidence to the country and the region.

The rupiah fell from 9,850 to the dollar to a record low of 12,000 — almost 80 per cent below the levels seen six months ago — before recovering slightly to close at 11,700. The Malaysian ringgit fell from 4,200 to the dollar to 4,500, while the South Korean won fell from 1,642 to 1,732 to the dollar.

The fall in the won hit confidence in the South Korean stock market, which declined 5 per cent as foreign investors withdrew from the market. The Hang Seng in Hong Kong also finished down 186.9 points at 9,246.8.

But elsewhere in Asia bargain hunters took advantage of the latest currency falls to return to the market with even the Indonesian stock market closing up 4 per cent.

Dealers blamed the sharp fall in the rupiah on rumours that Jusuf Habibie, the Indonesian Research and Technology Minister, is President Suharto's choice for vice-president — effectively, the leader in waiting. Mr Habibie is believed to have only weak links with the politically powerful Indonesian military and traders are worried that the country is set for a period of political uncertainty.

Analysts were also scathing about Mr Habibie's economic record. He is closely linked with IPTN, the state-owned aircraft manufacturer, which many economists regard as a prime example of wasteful expenditure.

There was also continuing concern over the ability of Indonesian banks and companies to service their dollar debt obligations. Reports yesterday suggested that some companies were trying to settle dollar debts in rupiah, forcing the Indonesian central bank to announce late in the day that it was preparing guidelines on resolving the debt problems.



Ian Robinson, left, managing director of Ultraframe, John Lancaster, chairman, and David Moore, finance director

### Ultraframe up to £12.8m

ULTRAFRAME, the conservatory roofing systems company that was floated on the stock market in October, has reported pre-tax profits of £12.84 million in the year to September 26 (Adam Jones writes).

### Boeing to take \$1.4bn hit

FROM OLIVER AUGUST IN NEW YORK

BOEING, the world's biggest aerospace group, will take a \$1.4 billion charge against profits for the fourth quarter of 1997, rounding off a year marked by financial misery in spite of record orders and a megamerger.

The charge mainly relates to writing down the value of assets taken over from McDonnell Douglas, with whom Boeing merged in a \$16 billion deal last summer. The group had previously announced a \$1.6 billion charge for the third quarter and cautioned

that another charge was due in the fourth quarter. Phil Condit, the Boeing chairman, said: "The charge principally represents an inventory valuation adjustment for Douglas Product Division programmes, based on post-merger assessments of market conditions and related programme decisions. Also included in the charge are valuation adjustments in connection with customer financing assets and commitments."

Mr Condit said fourth quarter and full-year results, to be reported on January 27, will show a loss with the charge. Boeing has been struck by a range of problems recently. The merger has been difficult to implement because dozens of factories across the US have to be integrated. In addition, labor shortages and supply bottlenecks led to a month-long shutdown of assembly lines in the autumn. Analysts blame Boeing for creating the problems with its cost-cutting strategy of the past few years. The Asian crisis has further undermined Boeing.

## US trade deficit narrows to \$8bn

THE US trade deficit, reflecting slumping oil prices and a fall in the value of imports, unexpectedly narrowed 11.6 per cent to \$8 billion (about £4.9 billion) in November from \$9.1 billion in October, the Commerce Department said yesterday. Analysts had predicted the shortfall in goods and services to widen to \$10.2 billion. Imports fell \$2.1 billion, or 2.3 per cent, in November to \$87.2 billion, while the value of exports decreased \$1 billion, or 1.3 per cent, to \$79.2 billion. For the first 11 months of 1997, the deficit was \$102.1 billion compared with \$100.4 billion a year earlier. For all of 1996, the trade deficit was \$111 billion.

The deficit with Japan shrank to \$4.2 billion from \$4.25 billion in November 1996 and \$5.9 billion in October. In the first 11 months, the trade deficit with Japan totalled \$30.6 billion compared with \$43.3 billion for the same period in 1996. The value of motor vehicle and parts imports from Japan fell \$354 million in November, while motor exports to Japan rose \$42 million. The trade deficit with China rose to \$4.13 billion from \$3 billion a year earlier and \$2.2 billion in October. The deficit with the European Union widened to \$1.2 billion in November from \$1.06 billion in November 1996 and \$2.41 billion in October.

### Water payouts criticised

EXCESSIVE dividend payouts by water companies came under fresh attack yesterday with a report showing that two-thirds of profits made by the ten largest water companies have been paid to shareholders since privatisation. Waterwatch, the consumer pressure group, has calculated that Wessex Water customers have each contributed £436.68 towards dividend payments since 1990, while Severn Trent households have paid £408.39. Yorkshire Water customers have paid £225.93 each. The group has urged action to cap dividend payments.

### Savills shelves trust plan

SAVILLS, the property company, has shelved plans to launch the Savills Residential Property Trust (SRPT), which was expected to attract £65 million. SRPT was to be the first housing investment trust to be launched under legislation introduced two years ago. Initially institutions appeared to be interested in this new type of trust. However, according to Aubrey Adams, Savills managing director, institutional investors no longer have an interest in new issues. He refused to comment on how much the trust had cost to set up.

### Double for SFI Group

SFI GROUP, the pub operator formerly known as Surrey Free Inns, more than doubled pre-tax profits to £22 million in the 24 weeks to November 16 as the benefits of last year's acquisition of Richardson's Inns flowed through. SFI, which moved from AIM to the main market in September, is close to securing a second site for For Your Eyes Only, the table-dancing concept that came with Richardson's. Turnover was up 82 per cent to £125 million, and earnings per share rose 45 per cent to 3.2p. The interim dividend is increased by 25 per cent to 0.4p.

### AIM Group loses £2m

AIM GROUP, the airport and railway intercity maker, announced a £2 million interim loss yesterday and again gave warning that it will be difficult to make an overall full-year profit. The loss follows a £3.65 million exceptional write-off now that the Saab 2000 aircraft is to cease production in 1999. AIM first alerted investors about the problems in November. The loss per share was 11.4p (5.3p earnings). The shares, worth 590p in June, fell 1.5p to 274.5p yesterday. Half-year turnover was £29.08 million (£36.09 million). The interim dividend is 1.5p (9p).

### Scottish Equitable up

SCOTTISH EQUITABLE, the pensions and investment company, yesterday provided further evidence that 1997 was a year of strong new business growth for life insurers when it announced a 10 per cent rise in total new premiums, to £1.63 billion. Total annualised premium income rose by 20 per cent, to £308 million, and new annual premiums rose by 35 per cent, to £161 million. New single premiums rose by 7 per cent, to £1.5 billion. Scottish Equitable is part of the Aegon group, one of the world's top ten insurers.

### Dell jobs for Ireland

DELL COMPUTER CORPORATION, the American computer company, will today announce the creation of more than 1,000 jobs in the Republic of Ireland through the expansion of its European manufacturing headquarters in Limerick. The company already employs 1,400 people at the site. The expansion will be complete when Mary Harney, the Deputy Irish Premier and Minister for Enterprise, Employment and Trade, meets Limerick industrialists.

### Syltone sounds warning

SHARES of Syltone fell 13.5p to 103p yesterday after the transport engineering group said the business had been adversely affected by the economic turmoil in the Far East. The company said its current exposure to uncertain debts in the region was £1.2 million. Trading was otherwise generally in line with the board's expectations. Syltone also confirmed the £11.7 million acquisition of the Perole Group, a French manufacturer of tank-truck equipment for the petrochemical industry.

### Shani cuts dividend

SHANI GROUP, the maker of women's and children's clothing, is cutting its total dividend to 7.7p a share, from 5.7p, after a fall in profits to £1.36 million, from £3.13 million, in the year to October 31. Earnings per share fell to 6.4p (4.3p). The final dividend is 3p. Martin Hollis, chairman, said Shani had endured "the most difficult period of trading within our sector for years". Turnover fell to £29.6 million (£33.8 million). The shares, 128p almost a year ago, stayed at 40p yesterday.

## Midshires chief is tipped for RBS

By ANNE ASHWORTH

TONY SCHOFIELD, managing director of retail banking for the Royal Bank of Scotland, is to retire at the end of March. The announcement, made to staff yesterday, has fuelled speculation that Mr Schofield's post may, in due course, be filled by Mike Jackson, currently chief executive of Birmingham Midshires Building Society.

Some in banking circles believe that Mr Jackson, 49, a former banker, may then be one of the executives likely to replace George Mathewson, the current RBS group chief executive. Dr Mathewson, 57, could then become chairman of the bank.

RBS is taking over Birmingham Midshires in a £630 million deal that should be completed in the late summer. When the deal was announced, it was specified that Mr Jackson would be made chairman

of Birmingham Midshires and would also get a senior post in RBS, plus a seat on the main board. He will be made responsible for finding building society deals for RBS, which is keen for a bigger slice of the mortgage market.

Mr Jackson, a former aerospace engineer who has worked for Citibank and for Bank of America, is credited with retrieving the Birmingham Midshires from an uncertain financial position after joining it in 1990.

RBS yesterday declined to comment on Mr Schofield's successor. Birmingham Midshires said: "Nothing has been agreed or discussed about Mr Jackson's role if the proposed merger with RBS goes ahead. We still have to receive the approval of the members of the society and the regulators."

### Portman doubles membership

By MARIANNE CURPHEY

PORTMAN Building Society, one of the UK's biggest mutuals, was inundated by carpet-baggers last year who helped to double its membership to 1.2 million.

After a year of change and turbulence for building societies, the Portman said it had attracted almost 600,000 new members in 1997, compared with an increase of 350,000 new members in 1996.

Many of these were speculators who hoped the Portman would convert to a bank. Ken Culley, chief executive, said the number of new applicants fell after the society increased its minimum opening balance to £1,000 in the summer. Last month it reduced the minimum to £100.

New savings money and a good year of stock market growth helped to increase the group's pre-tax profits by 20 per cent to £41 million and total assets grew 18 per cent to £4.7 billion.

### Deputy to lead merger watchdog

By CHRISTINE BUCKLEY

THE Monopolies and Mergers Commission (MMC) is to be led by Derek Morris, its current deputy chairman, from next month.

Dr Morris, 52, will go on to chair the Competition Commission — the new body that is to absorb the functions of the MMC under legislation now before Parliament.

Dr Morris chaired the recent MMC inquiries into the Pacificorp bid for The Energy Group and the Littlewoods/Premiers takeover plan. He has served on the MMC since 1991.

Margaret Beckett, President of the Board of Trade, said: "I am confident of his ability to steer the organisation successfully through its transformation into the Competition Commission."

Dr Morris, who will earn £120,000 a year in a four-year appointment, is currently an economics tutor at Oriel College, Oxford.

THE TIMES

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## Loss of account

Switch at Dawson as Finlay steps down

Eid wil

HSN chief



# Early learning curve for Handover



COMMENTARY  
by our City Editor

It's official: December was a disappointing month for retailers. A glance at the latest figures from the Office of National Statistics was enough to prompt speculators to sell sterling and reverse their gamble on a rise in interest rates.

Those who stopped their knees jerking long enough would have realised that the figures did not necessitate a whip round to bale out the great British shopkeeper. While the index showed the steepest dip in December compared with November, the ONS statistics also indicate that British shoppers spent 7 per cent more in December 1997 than they did in December 1996, which hardly amounts to a slump in demand.

Expectations that the public will always indulge in an extravagant Christmas spree should now be tempered by the knowledge that January sales are equally tempting for discerning shoppers who have learned to like their discounts.

But while the latest figures do not provide the excuse for a shopping expedition as a charitable gesture, do not desecrate any sympathy for the stores.

Life is tough on the high street, as John Menzies will today acknowledge. That the venerable Scottish business should decide to pull down the shutters for the last time on its 400 shops is evidence that customers were not spreading that

extra 7 per cent of cash equitably during December, or before.

As this column pointed out earlier this week, the supermarkets are proving to be the goblins of the retail scene, gobbling up the business that others had assumed was theirs by right. Menzies has seen its funder vanishing to the out of town supermarkets, as has WH Smith. Menzies' troubles have been compounded by the failure to accept the lessons of the Early Learning Centre at the primary stage. The wholesale idea of selling up-market wooden toys and worthy books might have had a chance of success in perhaps fifty locations, but expanding beyond 200 and trying to lure customers away from the gaudy plastic offerings of Toys R Us and the like illustrated optimism verging on a misplaced desire to indulge in a little social engineering.

Inevitably, the cash rich venture capitalists will crawl over Menzies to see if there is anything worth having. For Richard Handover, the uninspired choice of chief executive at WH Smith, the Menzies decision to exit retailing in favour of the glamorous task of baggage handling, must add to qualms over

whether he has taken on the impossible task.

Where it has a captive market, at railway stations, WH Smith can survive and could do very much better than that. In shopping centres, the store has little to offer that others do not do rather better. If Handover does not sized stores now, he may be forced to later. Delay could see him trying to sell into the retail slump that the gloom mongers were prematurely divining yesterday.

## The wrong man for the job

Goffrey Robinson was in Edinburgh yesterday to reassure the members of the Pep Managers Association that his proposals for the new savings scheme, Isa, were not the definitive version. Indeed, some delegates at the conference appeared to depart with the message that the Isa as outlined last

month was little more than a suggestion, intended to encourage others to come up with ideas. Perhaps that £50,000 limit for tax relief was just a joke that the millionaire Pay Master General inserted to enliven the otherwise dull subject of plebeian savings.

While the figure itself caused fury amongst middle class investors and those who sell to them, there is no doubt that the reaction was intensified because of the revelations over the personal finances of the man delivering news of this potential retrospective punishment of the prudent. The Government may be hoping that after the minor rebuke from Sir Gordon Downey, Mr Robinson will be left to get on with his work while others, in Guernsey, look after his fortune. This is wishful thinking.

Whenever he pronounces on the subject of personal savings, Mr Robinson's efforts will be devalued by his handling of both the

Orion Trust and the Isa launch. There are still questions that remain unanswered about his off-shore wealth and his apparent involvement in determining how it is invested. The Opposition would not be playing the parliamentary game if they did not try, and try again, to establish whether the trust is worth £13 million or £300 million. They would be shirking their duties if they did not underline the difficulties in understanding how a discretionary beneficiary who claimed to have no involvement in the running of the trust's affairs might have successfully suggested to the trustees that they acquire shares from his own business.

Mr Robinson may be an able businessman — Madame Bourgeois obviously thought so. He was probably the ideal choice to be put in charge of making a success of the PFI, the vital project for bringing private sector finance into public sector

projects. But he is not the man to rescue Isa, a task which is even more vital for the nation's savers. With submissions from interested parties due to be in by the end of the month, sensible decisions on the shape of Isa will soon need to be taken. Mr Robinson is not the man to take them. A speedy move to the DTI, where PFI naturally fits, looms.

## What Price independence?

Can it be only six years, two months and 16 days since Robert Maxwell disappeared off the side of his yacht and into the Atlantic? It is hard to believe, especially as so many things have happened since. A £400 million hole appeared in the pension fund; his main public company, Maxwell Communication Corporation, was placed in administration; accountants took over the rest of the empire; all sorts of legal actions were issued chasing all sorts of assets, which ended up raising enough money to secure pensions for all Maxwell's former employees. So imagine the surprise when it emerged yesterday that Grant Thornton was

to take over the legal action against Coopers & Lybrand, the auditors of MCC.

This is a sensible move. After all, it would not do for the MCC administrators to continue this action, given that that honour falls to Price Waterhouse, which just happens to be attempting to merge with Coopers. This conflict presents another argument against the creation of the Coopers Waterhouse accountancy monolith, or the KMPG & Young monster for that matter. Soon there will be hardly any decent firms able to take on large insolventcies for fear of tripping over their colleagues on the auditing side.

But this begs an even more fundamental question. If the Price Waterhouse administrators were serious about this legal action, why have they done little more than issue the writ and ignore it?

## Herculean task

Schroders should have been the toast of Bradford last night after its triumph in saving Allied Colloids from the clutches of Hercules and delivering the company into the more friendly, and exceedingly generous, hands of Ciba. Persuading both bidders that they cannot risk letting the other side win is always a good tactic. In this case, it not only doubled shareholders' money, it saw that David Farrar's spirited efforts were justly rewarded.

# Loss of £75m advertising account in US hits GGT

By JASON NISSE

SHARES in GGT Group, the advertising group, fell 40 per cent yesterday after it emerged that the firm's New York agency, Wells BDDP, had lost its largest account — £75 million of annual work for Procter & Gamble (P&G), the consumer goods business.

Mike Greenlee, chairman of GGT, said the group was sending a team to review the US operation, which it bought as part of the £120 million takeover of BDDP last year. P&G represented more than a third of the annual billings for Wells and produced about £6 million of annual profits. Its loss will result in a £3 million charge in this year's results.

The unprecedented move by P&G was prompted by the

shock resignation before Christmas of Paula Forman, Wells's chief operating officer, who had fallen out with Frank Assumano, the Wells president. Two other senior executives on the P&G account, Beverly Okuda and Keith Bunnell, also resigned this week.

High level diplomacy, which included Mr Greenlee talking directly to P&G, failed to sway the detergents and cosmetics group.

Advertising analysts yesterday questioned whether some of the senior executives at BDDP, which is headquartered in Paris, will stay with the group after the P&G loss.

The largest beneficiary of P&G's move will be Saatchi & Saatchi, which is picking up

the Oil of Ulay account in the US, estimated to be worth more than £50 million a year.

News of the loss broke in the US yesterday morning, prompting GGT to suspend its shares so that it could bring forward the announcement of its interim results, which were due out today. When the shares returned, they fell 50p to 123½p.

The figures showed a 10 per cent rise in revenues, on a pro forma basis, to £101 million in the six months to October 31. This delivered pre-tax profits of £8.15 million, compared with £3.4 million for the old GGT last year. Earnings per share slipped from 7.59p to 7.15p and the interim dividend is 2.5p (2.3p). Analysts were

expecting GGT to make about £18 million this year, but this will now be hit by a £3 million restructuring charge as a result of the P&G loss.

Mark Bayliss, GGT's finance director, said that otherwise there would be little effect from losing the P&G business this year and that the group hoped to win enough business to make up for the loss in the next financial year.

In addition GGT is selling Financial Dynamics, the public relations agency, for £8 million. This business came as part of the BDDP purchase and was valued in the books at £7 million.

Tempus, page 26  
Diary, page 27

## Beazer buys site for 1,700 homes

IN A significant display of faith in the future of the property market, Beazer Group, the housebuilder, has bought a 315-acre site near Fleet, Hampshire, with planning permission for 1,700 homes (Adam Jones writes).

Beazer said it will build a mix of social, mainstream and upmarket housing on the site, bought from Railtrack, the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food and a private trust.

It would not reveal how much it is paying but said the average plot cost less than 30 per cent of the current selling price of a home there.

The site is on the Surrey border with nearby access to the M3 plus commuter rail links to London. Building will start in 1999. Last year Beazer completed on 7,177 homes. Tempus, page 26

## W&P to double size of Alldays

By FRASER NELSON

WATSON & PHILIP intends to double the size of its Alldays convenience store chain over the next three years, cashing in on an expected rise in demand for top-up shopping.

The company, which runs 750 Alldays stores across the UK, plans to open 200 more this year — setting a pace which it hopes will create 300 jobs and take it towards its target of 2,000 stores.

The expansion will be done through the company's franchising system where managers put up £100,000 of their own money and stand to make £1 million each if the expansion is a success and Watson & Philip buys them out.

Colin Glass, chief executive, said the company intends to pick all the best sites for convenience stores before the supermarket chains. He said: "There

are around 1,200 really good locations out there."

Its Alldays stores enjoyed like-for-like growth of 5 per cent in the year to November 2. After opening 235 more stores, overall pre-tax profits jumped 15 per cent to a better than expected £21.5 million.

Its Foodservice division saw operating profits gain 14 per cent to £4.6 million.

The results triggered a £1.34 million share payout between its 33 top managers, setting off the first wave of its three-year incentive programme. This, and the cost of buying £341,000 of shares for the second wave, led to a £1.3 million exceptional cost. The total dividend is 18.8p (17.5p), with a final 13.1p due on March 20.

Tempus, page 26

## John David Sports hit by 8% decline

SHARES of John David Sports fell 23p to 107½p yesterday after the sports retailer said Christmas trading had been disappointing (Fraser Nelson writes).

Like-for-like sales declined 8 per cent in the six months before Christmas. After spending £3.7 million on opening 14 new JD Sports shops, pre-tax profits advanced to £5.2 million (£4.35 million) for the six months to November 2, helping earnings to 8.2p (6.75p) a share.

A maiden interim dividend of 2p is being paid on March 4, suggesting a 6.5p total for the year. This would deliver £985,000 for John Wardle, chairman, and £825,100 for David Makin, chief executive, who between them own 60 per cent of the shares. The shares floated at 300p.

## Switch at Dawson as Finlay steps down

By CHRIS AYLES

DEREK FINLAY, chairman and chief executive of Dawson International, yesterday stood down from his executive role two years after coming out of retirement to turn the ailing Scottish knitwear company around. Dawson, which makes Pringle sweaters, has appointed its current managing director, Peter Forrest, as a replacement. The company said that it had failed to find a suitable candidate from outside.

Mr Finlay, a former director of Heinz, will become non-executive chairman of Dawson, and is unlikely to take a full-time role elsewhere.

Mr Forrest became managing director of Dawson in 1995, after working in Italy as a director of Legger Stoffel, one of Europe's biggest textile manufacturers. He joined Dawson in 1991 as a corporate development director. Dawson said that it would not hire another managing director.

Mr Finlay said: "During the last two and a half years, Peter has been a key member in the executive team which has developed and implemented the turnaround strategy. This has brought stability and improved performance to the group."

Dawson turned losses of £98 million in 1994 into pre-tax profits of £12.5 million last year. However, it has suffered from rising raw material prices, fierce competition and the strength of sterling.

The shares yesterday stayed at 63½p, against 236½p in early 1994 and 55p last year.



Lara Croft, heroine of Eidos's Tomb Raider game

## Eidos bounces back with leap in shares

By CHRIS AYLES

EIDOS, the computer games maker best known for its Tomb Raider, yesterday continued its comeback since the summer, with a 132½p jump in its share price to 872½p.

The company said that it had sold an estimated four million copies of its various games in the final quarter of 1997. Results for the year to March 31 would "show a level of profit substantially in excess of current market expectations", Eidos said.

Eidos's shares more than halved in value from a high of £10.45 last March to 447½p in September as disappointing sales and a change of auditor hit City faith. Strong sales have aided a return to form. The shares floated in 1995 at 14½p are up 60 times, but some pundits doubt Eidos will ever find another hit like Tomb Raider.

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## Clearance for DMGT to acquire Essex Radio

By RAYMOND SNOODY  
MEDIA EDITOR

THE Daily Mail and General Trust, publisher of the Daily Mail, yesterday took a significant step forward in its plans to build its UK commercial radio interests when the way was cleared to a takeover of Essex Radio.

The Radio Authority, the industry regulatory body, decided that the proposed acquisition of Essex, which operates five local radio services, would not operate against the public interest. Last year the authority blocked a DMGT acquisition of Leicester Sound because the company owned the dominant newspaper in the area, the Leicester Mercury.

DMG Radio, a subsidiary of Daily Mail and General Trust, already owned 13.8 per cent of Essex Radio and was planning to take its stake to 41 per cent — the move now approved by the Radio Authority. This in turn triggers a mandatory cash offer for the outstanding shares. The offer values each share at £21.27 and the entire company at £20.9 million. DMGT already has undertaken that takes its interest in the company to 52.5 per cent.

Essex Radio, which broadcasts to 3.15 million listeners in Essex, Hertfordshire and the East Anglian region had pre-tax profits of £1.6 million on turnover of £5.41 million in the year to September 30. DMGT has always made it clear it wants to build up a commercial radio empire.

## HSN chief poised to earn \$300m

FROM OLIVER AUGUST  
IN NEW YORK

BARRY DILLER, the executive chairman of HSN, the former US Home Shopping Network, is poised to earn around \$300 million (£98 million) from a ten-year stock option package.

The entertainment sector is fast surpassing Wall Street as America's best-paying industry. Michael Eisner, the Disney chairman, will be paid \$770 million over ten years. The longevity of the pay deals is seen as a shift in emphasis

to creating shareholder value over the long-term.

Mr Diller is trying to build HSN's string of local cable television stations into a national network after the \$4 billion acquisition of Universal Studio's television arm from Seagram last year.

Mr Diller, who does not receive a salary, will receive 4.75 million options which he may exercise in instalments by 2007. The pay deal is detailed in documents filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission.

The options were awarded last September and are already worth \$50 million. The valuation of the option package of \$300 million is based on an estimated annual share price rise of 10 per cent.

Alan Snyder, a fund manager with a big HSN stake, said: "The problem in industries like that is that you have people like Michael Eisner setting such high standards for gross compensation. It's hard to argue that any other smaller level is excessive."

Mr Diller's eventual stock portfolio will total around 10 per cent of outstanding HSN shares.

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STOCK MARKET

Stock Market Writer of the Year

# Booker dives again as analysts cut forecasts

JUST when shareholders of Booker, the food distributor, thought things could not get any worse, the shares hit a new low with a drop of 23p to 220p.

Earlier this month Booker was trading at around 350p before the company gave warning that pre-tax profits would come in at less than £80 million, some £15 million below forecasts. SBC Warburg, the broker, which has stuck loyally to the group's cause, were at one time looking for profits of £120 million.

The City has taken an increasingly bearish view of prospects. Further write-offs are envisaged after the sale of its prepared foods business. Analysts had been looking for £130 million for 1998, but have reduced their forecasts to £100 million.

The strong pound, increased tobacco duty and cheap Norwegian salmon are among the excuses offered by the management.

The rest of the equity market closed with small losses on the day. The unexpected drop in official retail sales during December offered some hope that another rate rise could be deferred but investors appeared unconvinced.

Share prices clawed back a near 50-point loss and moved into positive territory. But a plunge of 125 points at the start of trading on Wall Street sent investors racing for cover. The FTSE 100 index ended 5.9 down at 5,272.3 as total turnover breached the billion mark for the second time this week.

SmithKline Beecham was the heaviest traded blue chip with almost 21 million shares changing hands as the price dropped 54p to 706p. Some brokers are doubtful that the proposed £80 billion merger with American Home Products will get the necessary clearance. Rival Glaxo Wellcome dropped 49p to £16.20, while takeover hopes lifted Zeeva 83p to £24.40.

There was also further heavy turnover in Shell (£8.8 million shares), 14p better at 411p, and British Telecom (£9.9 million), up 7p to 557p. British Steel held steady at 128p despite an upbeat presentation for brokers in London on Tuesday night.

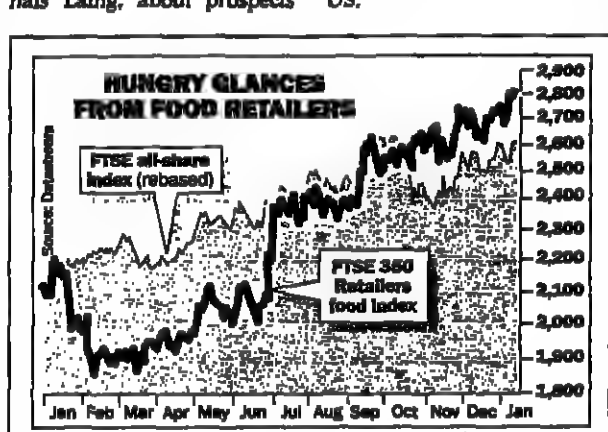
Speculators did not have to wait long for Ciba, the Swiss group, to make up its mind whether to take on Hercules of the US in the battle for control of Allied Colloids. Yesterday



Booker blamed partly cheap salmon for its troubles

Ciba slapped a bid on the table worth £25p, topping a higher offer of 195p from Hercules earlier in the week. Colloids put on 11p to a new high of 201p.

Dresdner Kleinwort Benson, the broker, continued to lose ground, dropping 20p to 750p as the City continued to ponder this week's new business figures showing a slowdown in the US.



SAFeway edged 21p higher to 375p on revised talk that rival Asda may be poised to bid. Bid talks last year ended in failure, but it is known Asda, 54p firmer at 199p, needs to make an acquisition in order to increase market share and close the gap on its two biggest rivals, Tesco, up 9p to 525p, and Sainsbury, 9p higher at 514p.

Both Societe Generale Strauss Turbulla, the broker, and rival Dresdner Kleinwort Benson are buyers of Safeway.

Mike Dennis at SocGen has just published some research on Safeway and puts a price tag on the shares of 420p if the merger goes ahead but only 300p if it does not.

He has also put a value on Asda of 225p if both sides agree to merge and only 175p if they do not. Mr Dennis remains a buyer of Asda but urges clients to put off buying the shares until Safeway issues its Christmas trading statement. Word is that trading has been poor.

Speculation about the state of play intensified on whispers that the release date had been delayed.

Elsewhere in the financial sector London & Manchester touched 573p after ending the session 12p dearer at 553p on revised talk of a bid from rival Britannic, 20p better at £11.65. Another takeover favourite, Norwich Union, was 9p better at 416p.

Worries about the impact in South-East Asia on profitability left P&O 15p down at 672p. Reports claim that shipping rates have declined by as much as 20 per cent since the start of the Asian turmoil back in October.

There was little for shareholders of John David Sports to cheer about with the price tumbling 21p to 109p after a gloomy trading update. The sports retailer reported an 8 per cent drop in like-for-like sales during the six months to September 30.

Rival JB Sports fell 7p to 651p.

There was a brief halt called to trading in GGT Group while the advertising agency announced that next year's results would be hit badly by the loss of the Procter & Gamble account. After the shares were requested they fell 80p to a new low of 123p.

One of the best performances on the day came from Eidos, up 132p, 17.9 per cent, at 872p. The group, which created the computer game Tomb Raider 2, says profits for the year will be substantially ahead of market expectations.

Dragonair, which appointed Dresdner Kleinwort Benson as sponsor and financial adviser, rose 21p to 65p.

AIM-listed Car City was marked up higher at 48p amid mounting speculation that it was on the verge of a big deal.

GLT-EDGED: The weaker than expected retail sales undermined sterling and provided a suitable boost to the bond market. Brokers hope the latest numbers may deter the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee from raising rates.

In the futures pit, the March series of the long gilt finished five ticks lower at £123.1, while in the cash market Treasury 7½ per cent 2007 finished a couple of ticks down at £108.19.

NEW YORK: IBM's warning about current-quarter earnings, together with weakness in Asia, unnerved investors. At midday the Dow Jones industrial average was 100.39 points down at 7,712.3.

New York (midday):

Dow Jones 7712.3 (-100.39)

S&amp;P Composite 937.85 (-10.75)

Tokyo: Nikkei Average 16684.42 (-317.89)

Hong Kong: Hang Seng 10460.80 (-186.90)

Amsterdam: AEX Index 350.40 (-2.41)

Sydney: All Ordinaries 2622.80 (-16.40)

Frankfurt: DAX 4282.94 (-25.07)

Singapore: Straits Times 1311.40 (-14.49)

Brussels: CAC-40 3998.11 (-10.23)

Zurich: SMI 1281.10 (-2.03)

London: FTSE 100 5272.3 (-5.9)

FTSE 250 4825.4 (-4.9)

FTSE 350 2597.1 (-1.9)

FTSE Europe 100 2749.05 (-1.05)

FTSE All-Share 2406.56 (-1.55)

FTSE Non Financials 2474.12 (-0.42)

FTSE Financials 2474.12 (-0.42)

FTSE Govt 500 102.06 (-0.10)

Barracuda 659.48

SEAQ Volume 1,038,014,038

German Mark 2,974.7 (-0.0225)

Exchange Index 104.5 (-0.7)

Bank of England official base rate (4p)

ESG 1.5125

LSE 1.2438

NPI 160.0 Dec (3.6%) Jan 1987-1990

NPI 198.3 Dec (2.7%) Jan 1987-1990

Abbey Nat Dublin 934

BCO Technologies 1904

Bond Int Software 72

General Inds 354

Longmarch (135) 144

Marchpole 110

Kernback Vehicles 1024

Second Scot 112

Second Scottish 112

Wyndham Motor 1034

Calluna n/p (9)

RISSE: Black Arrow 124p (+12p)

Siddagroup 205p (+18p)

BVA 225p (+14p)

Heron 274p (+17p)

Rio Tinto 791p (+30p)

Brite Bros 857p (+38p)

Argos 418p (+18p)

Celt Telecom 791p (+34p)

ASA Tech 567p (+24p)

Lorain 810p (+12p)

BAA 408p (+27p)

GRI 383p (+11p)

Imperial Tob 445p (+13p)

Cattell 447p (+13p)

Reckitt Colm 970p (+28p)

FALLS: Booker 220p (-23p)

Bocomps Int 418p (-25p)

Trade Padline 460p (-8p)

Fixed Earth 225p (-12p)

Eng China Cl 224p (-11p)

Smithline 705p (-34p)

Cams Milling 234p (-11p)

Wickes 285p (-13p)

Old Eng Pub 304p (-12p)

Sagapac 780p (-25p)

TI 480p (-16p)

Capita GP 286p (-12p)

RMC GP 775p (-22p)

Ryl Bk Bk 837p (-24p)

Bess 874p (-24p)

Broken Hill 557p (-14p)

Hays 526p (-21p)

Closing Prices Page 29

## Not as advertised

THE statement accompanying GGT Group's full-year results betrays the haste in which they were rushed out. Mike Greenless, the only one of GGT's founders still with the advertising company, wanted to reassure the market about the £120 million purchase of BDDP, which more than doubled its size. Unfortunately Procter & Gamble, the group's largest client, decided this week was a good moment to remove its account from the New York arm of BDDP, cutting £80 million a year from billings and £6 million from profits. As Mr Greenless did not have enough time to enclose the statement that "In the US as a whole we have enjoyed a good performance. That now reads rather like 'Apart from the incident, Mrs Lincoln, did you enjoy the play?'"

The market reaction — knocking two fifths

from the share price — might be a little overdone, but you can hardly blame investors heading for the hills. The BDDP deal was always ambitious, bringing back 1980s memories of WPP's purchase of J Walter Thompson or, worse, Blue Arrow's purchase of Manpower. GGT never appeared to have the management to handle BDDP. The loss of three key people at Wells BDDP in New York that precipitated the P&G switch appears to prove this.

The continued recession in France and the disappearance of growth opportunities in the Far East will make it more difficult for GGT to make up any shortfall. It will take some time for the market to trust GGT again. Meanwhile, Saatchi & Saatchi, the winner of the lion's share of the lost P&G, looks attractive once more.

## Allied Colloids

THE fevered battle for Allied Colloids has taken us all by surprise — and certainly

Tempus. Hopes of a price close to 200p looked like empty dreaming when Hercules made its first offer in November. Ciba, Specialty Chemicals has finally secured the prize for 255p a share. At £1.42 billion, that amounts to £350 million more than the value of Hercules's opening bid. The Allied Colloids management, led by David Farrar and advised by Schroders, have certainly done a fine job for their shareholders.

Ciba is clearly paying a very full price. The offer works out at nearly 26 times the Allied Colloids forecast of its earnings for the current year. Ciba admits the deal will dilute its earnings in 1998, leading to a fall in

## Watson & Philip

WATSON & Philip, like any

of today's half-successful retailers, has its mind set on nationwide domination. With its existing stores, many would say it is easily surpassed by one of the big four supermarkets.

But with such a firm hold in the market for convenience stores, which is watched by the likes of Sainsbury, with envious eyes, it doesn't need speculation to underpin the still lowly share valuation.

Even after yesterday's advance, they are still rated at 123 times forecast earnings — suggesting that few in the City think this company is going anywhere fast.

This marks an opportunity. Watson's critics take fright at its franchising system, where managers chip in and take the risk for the first five years of any new store, leaving Watson the option to buy them out later.

Unusual, yes, but so far, it seems to be working. If anything, the system makes

## Beazer

OPINIONS on the likely direction of the housing market

are still divided, which is why Beazer's purchase of a large office of prime North Hampshire to a small drop in the share price yesterday, from 169p to 166p.

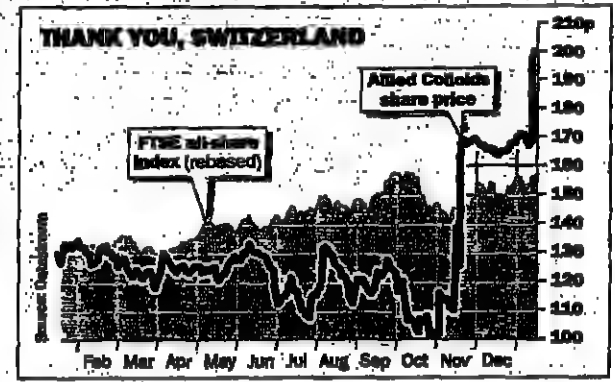
The site has planning permission for 1,700 homes, quite a feat in a place with a reputation for being tough on con-

struction. Near Fleet, it is just inside London's southwest commuter belt, meaning there will be demand for Beazer's Charles Church up-market houses. The development will also include an element of social housing.

Beazer will not say how much it paid but assumes that the average plot will turn out to be not more than 30 per cent of the selling price of the home. That is not too bad: land cost/selling price ratios up and down the country range from the teens to maybe 50 per cent. Beazer had a fair land bank beforehand and need not overpay.

Beazer-watchers were expecting a significant move like this: it has the resources to fund the deal from cash and existing borrowing facilities. But the housebuilders still can't seem to get the market to share their enthusiasm, despite the relative stability of interest rates and other economic indicators.

PAUL DURMAN



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AMERICA AGENDA

BROWNE MADDOX

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## The pension no one should want

A portent of doom has suddenly descended on Tony Blair's dream of a stakeholder society, or on the only part of that vision yet to see the light of day. The unloved state earnings-related pensions scheme (Serps) is to be superseded by a scheme available to all and invested in the stock market. It sounds promising but contains the seed of disaster.

That seed has grown from the internal debate over one crucial detail of the proposed "stakeholder" pension. Should it be voluntary or compulsory? When the concept was launched, citizens were to be free to choose, even if only fools would say no. Now, a minister has officially hinted that all employees will be forced to contribute. Power does that to people.

Frank Field, the evangelical social security minister, argues that citizens "have a responsibility to provide for themselves when they are in a position to do so". Rhetoric does not bother to ask why they have to do so via a stakeholder pension scheme.

The best argument is pragmatic.

If earners have to opt in, the scheme is likely to miss the very people who are not members of pension schemes now, typically low-paid women or youth workers, and those whose employers do not offer a scheme of their own. Sensible people would want to join anyway. So choice would merely let off bad firms and feckless folk.

Compulsion would also have dire implications. The reasons are just as pragmatic. In principle, it is as fair to force workers into a private pension, as to force drivers to buy private motor insurance. In practice, making the scheme compulsory ensures that it will not be in savers' interest to join. The reason is simple. Once politicians force you to buy by law, they have no reason to offer you a positive incentive to do so.

Tax breaks have long been the *raison d'être* of pension schemes. Contributions are tax deductible,

allowing earners to invest more than they could in any other scheme from the same income. Fund income and capital gains have also been tax free. The pension at the other end is taxable, but a modest lump sum can be withdrawn tax-free on retirement.

Take away choice and future Chancellors of the Exchequer will remove these tax incentives, little by little, one by one, until none is left. Gordon Brown may claim to have no such plans, but that will not bind himself, let alone his successors. Axiom of pension relief would allow them to raise many billions without raising tax rates. To make matters worse, the tax breaks would be removed from all other private pensions, not just the compulsory stakeholder variety.

Does this sound cynical? Then look at experience. The state pension is compulsory; contributions are not deductible. Before the

election, Peter Lilley aimed to replace the basic pension and Serps by a private scheme. To pay for it, contributions would not be deductible. Mr Brown has already imposed a £5 billion a year levy on pension funds by removing the tax credit on dividends. It will get bigger year by year. He is rumoured to want to limit contribution relief to the standard rate of

income tax, or even to his putative 10 per cent rate, which will apply to mortgage interest from April. The tax-free lump sum is perennially offered as a sop to ravening Chancellors by pension funds, who have releasing capital to members anyway.

Frank Field may not trust citizens to provide for themselves. Citizens should certainly not trust the dozen Chancellors likely to roam Downing Street thirsting for revenue before today's youthful new pension fund member can draw a single euro from the pot.

Do tax breaks matter that much? If a thing is worth doing, it is worth doing without tax breaks that distort the market. Unfortunately, saving for a pension is, on its own, not worth doing in its own right. This is a deeply unappealing form of saving. You push money in through a one-way valve for up to 44 years. All that time you usually

lose control of your savings as well as access to them for life's opportunities and disasters.

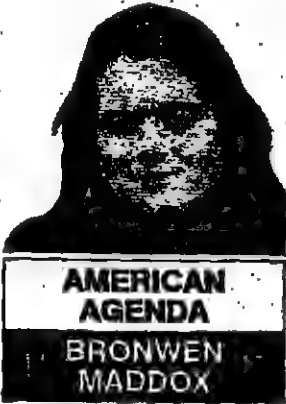
Once retirement dawns, you still cannot get your hands on the capital, beyond that doomed lump sum, let alone give it or will it to your descendants. You are forced to convert those savings into an annuity income, which dies with you or your spouse. So the returns depend almost entirely on how long you live. It is hard to imagine a more restrictive, inflexible savings vehicle, or one so inimical to the spread of wealth.

Ministers' priority, a vital one, is to cut future public spending. They assume that pensions are good for us, because tax-aided pensions have been so good for millions of people so far. The stakeholder pension will even draw on pension funds' honourable, paternalistic origins to make it look attractive. Employers will be forced to contribute too, as in voluntary company schemes. That should fool no one because those contributions are money that, under normal market forces, would otherwise be paid in wages.

No one can be sure what the returns will be on any form of savings over the next 40 years. If inflation stays low and economic growth subdued, today's relatively low long-term interest rates and high share prices point to far lower returns on securities than over the past 23 years. Mr Brown's tax raid has cut returns at a stroke.

Those whose entire savings potential is sucked into a stakeholder pension would probably earn far higher returns by buying their own house. Within 40 years, there should be reliable schemes for retired folk to turn houses into annuities if required. The tragedy ministers want to set in train is likely to leave the majority of those who are now young worse off in retirement as a result of an ill-considered scheme to help the minority. All because ministers do not trust people to choose.

## Competition may be ingrained but it can prove misguided



AMERICAN AGENDA  
BRONWEN MADDOX

Texas reaching a unilateral settlement with Big Tobacco, a Texas court ruling that the 1996 Telecommunications Act has no sway over the state's business — the headlines of current corporate news contain new ammunition for those who fear that the fashion for states' rights is detracting from the United States' overall fortunes.

Into the federal-versus-state debate, carried out with the passion, and along some of the same rifts, as Europe's debate about its future, has arrived a provocative new book that attempts to spell out the economic and social cost of growing competition between states, both for capital and citizens. *Disunited States* by John Donahue, associate professor at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government, provides badly needed evidence in this most ideological of controversies that competition may be hurting the players.

It is scarcely possible to overstate how deep the principle of competition — and migration to better circumstances — runs in the nation. Founded by dissenters who "voted with their feet" in leaving Europe, as the author puts it, the states have always competed with each other — over location of the nation's capital, over which language would be dominant, over which would own the main railroads and canals leading westwards. *The Wall Street Journal* has spoken for many on the Right of American politics in its repeated attacks on the European Commission for attempting to harmonise tax regimes and so eliminate



The tobacco settlement has been one area where individual states like Texas have been asserting themselves

similar competition between member countries.

Political theorists have tended to assume that the competition between the 50 states to attract businesses and people will lead to the best outcome for the US overall, not least by making the public sector more efficient and "businesslike". That claim has strong political appeal, given Americans' age-old antipathy to the costs of government, and the current fashion for "getting big government off the backs of people".

But as Donahue points out, the measures used to attract business can be counterproductive, even by the standards of a single state. Even more convincing is his evidence that what works in business does not transfer to public policy, that the "business" — especially but not exclusively among economists, that it must be possible to extend to the public sector these same benefits of competition.

"Competition between member countries... is an important virtue of our political system, indeed the important virtue. But competition among state governments is a far different thing, and most of its apparent virtues dissolve upon inspection."

Donahue notes that competition between the states for business investment appears to have been increasing, citing a 1997 study by Dun & Bradstreet which found that more than 56,000 businesses (bringing more than one million jobs) moved from one state to another between 1991 and 1995. In the two decades to 1995 the average number of incentive programmes offered by an individual state rose from 11 to 24, and 150 new business tax incentive programmes were introduced in 1995 alone.

"As capital becomes more

mobile the time-honoured tactics that states deploy to lure investment may be rendered... less benign in their ultimate effects". Donahue argues, pointing out colourfully, their growing expense.

That is true above all of the "nine deals that changed the American auto industry", moving car production from the Big Three carmakers in the Mid West at the start of the 1980s, to German and Japanese plants mainly in the South. In that migration "state officials were passionately engaged and Washington largely passive".

The now-notorious example in that pack is Alabama's successful courtship of Mercedes against counterbidding from almost every state in the South. The state's package of subsidies and tax breaks eventually approached \$300 million, a cost per job approaching three times the previous record.

In social policy, Donahue

has even more support for his case that the benefit of competition between states is overstated. He notes that differences in the efficiency of federal and state prisons can be explained by individual managers, not the level of government. Indeed, there is "considerable evidence that Bureau of Prisons operations are better run than their state level counterparts".

States are poor at learning from each other, he notes, even in expensive pension schemes, where the value of having your neighbour discover the laws is huge. New Jersey, for example, has remained since the Depression "the same rickety system of local financial accounting" despite plentiful evidence of its shortcomings and working examples of better models.

He concludes that moving the centre of gravity in public policymaking from Washington to the states will probably

improve the administrative efficiency of government somewhere between a little bit and not at all.

The most controversial part of his analysis concerns the risk that states, while scrambling to entice businesses and desirable residents from other states, will exploit their least mobile inhabitants.

It is true that despite decades of predictions that states with generous benefits would become "welfare magnets", there is little evidence that differences in benefit levels have strongly influenced migration. Nor have states noticeably competed to ratchet down benefits. Benefit levels, varied as much among states in 1985 as they had in 1940. The question is whether, under the radical welfare reform legislation signed by President Clinton in 1996, which allows the states greater discretion over benefit levels, this will now change.

More revealing are Donahue's figures showing that state taxes have become increasingly regressive — proportionately lighter on the better off. As he notes: "States rely far more than does the federal government on the consumption taxes that disproportionately affect families of modest means." Six states had no personal income tax in 1994, and only three increased tax rates as incomes passed \$100,000.

There appears clear evidence, too, that state governments have exploited the fact that people, tied by family and cultural roots to a region, tend to be less mobile than businesses. Of the state tax relief programme in 1995 and 1996, the first consecutive years of state tax reductions for 15 years, businesses received 28 per cent of the benefit, four times their contribution to tax revenues.

The conclusions that follow from Donahue's analysis are that it is misguided to rely on state competition to generate an adequate social safety net, and that federal intervention to cool the competition for business investment between states could be to the benefit of the country as a whole. That message may not thrive in the current political climate, but this cool and painstaking look at the evidence is no bad start.

## THE ICE BOX

THE HOT NEWS ON INFORMATION, COMMUNICATION AND ENTERTAINMENT

### Gambling on change of law

PLACING a bet, according to the old gamblers' adage, is what turns an opinion into a commitment. So far, it appears that the Government has neither when it comes to the complex and thorny subject of Internet betting.

Gambling on the Internet is already proving lucrative. Paul Zetter, chairman of Zetters, this week revealed that the football pools and bingo company takes several thousand pounds in card payments from its electronic pools site each week.

The Internet is, in theory, the perfect medium for gambling. Punters can take part in lotteries with several hundred million players, creating prizes which make the National Lottery jackpot look like mere pocket money.

Also, payments can easily be made by credit card; games can be played from home, and regular punters — such as a weekly lottery gambler — can be made automatically. Prizes are credited to cards, and winners notified by e-mail.

But concern is growing in two camps. Consumer groups and charities fear Internet gambling sites could be operated by fraudsters, and that enormous debts could be run up by the vulnerable, such as gambling addicts and children.

On the other side, casino, bingo and lottery operators are concerned that the Government will not adapt gambling law to fit new technology, leaving British companies out in the cold while offshore rivals bank a fortune.

Unfortunately, UK gambling law is devilishly complicated. It is based on an important distinction between gaming (casinos, lotteries and bingo) and betting (football pools and other punts).

Gaming can take place only on licensed premises, and credit cards are prohibited. This makes all forms of Internet gaming illegal. Betting, on the other hand, can take place anywhere as long as the operator has a licence. This means

that companies such as Zetters can legally set up Internet pools sites and take credit card payments.

In spite of these strict rules, it is unlikely that anyone could be prosecuted in Britain for using or operating gambling sites based offshore. However, the Home Office points out that this has not yet been tested in the courts.

The responsibility to solve the problem lies with the Gaming Board, which is threatening to prosecute UK companies that set up online gaming sites, and Jack Straw, the Home Secretary. The most common suggestion is that the Government creates its own strictly regulated online gambling industry.

Mr Straw should be familiar with the issue given that his wife, Alice Perkins, has recently been made a director of Littlewoods, the pools company. For the sake of the industry — and all the gullible gamblers out there — he should act quickly.

□ The CD-Rom sector is still reeling from last week's collapse of First Information. Although many CD-Rom companies are included in the much-hyped Information Technology Index, up 65 points since its creation last month, investors should steer clear. CD-Roms are being overtaken by sophisticated and flexible Internet software, leaving the main players such as the BBC and Dorling Kindersley fighting for space in a shrinking market. Expect more casualties.

□ Rumours are circulating that Internet appointments, the private online recruitment agency that advertises 65 per cent of all permanent IT jobs in the UK on its Taps.com site, could soon come to the Alternative Investment Market. Speculation heightened this week when Robert Walters, the supplier of IT and accountancy staff, confirmed that it had bought a 7 per cent stake, and was ready to increase it to 20 per cent.

CHRIS AYRES

## Debit side

THE Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales has been defending its lenient treatment of Tim Smith, after a survey of finance directors showed that most wanted him treated more severely. (So there are actually some crimes so vile that even the average finance director will not sign them off). Smith, the MP disgraced by the cash-for-questions affair, took about £18,000 in return for what the ICA's tribunal politely described as "lobbying services". He was required to hand £1,000 of it to the ICA, plus another £2,150 in costs.

More than half the finance directors contacted by the Reed Accountancy Age survey,

in this week's *Accountancy Age*, think he should have been thrown out. Another quarter think he should have been given a "larger fine". Matthew Pies, the ICA's director of professional standards, says £1,000 was the most the institute could levy until 1990, when the rules were changed to allow an unlimited penalty, while Smith's offences were committed in 1987 and 1988.

He accepts that Smith could have been expelled. The former MP was a prominent member of the institute's council, so one would have assumed his behaviour could at least be regarded as bringing the body and the profession into disrepute. Instead, the ICA tribunal decided his "substantial positive contribution" to the profession was a mitigating factor. It is suggested to me that Smith got off lightly because it would have reflected badly on such a professional body to expel so important a member — although the opposite could be argued, I am also told that he was felt to be a decent enough chap, foolish rather than venal, and this counted in his favour.

□ COMMERCIAL Union is holding its national sales conference at Brighton's Grand Hotel, scene of the 1983 IRA bomb attempt on the Conser-



native Party conference. Nothing wrong with that, but was it tactful to title the conference programme "Blast Off"?

### In a spin

I MAKE it a habit not to track the comings and goings of City spin-doctors, an increasingly popular breed since they became immune to most of the usual insinuations. But shareholders in GGT, the advertising agency that announced a profits warning yesterday, should not miss the fact that Financial Dynamics, its City public relations offshoot, has been sold to management for £8 million. This is about half what two other PR agencies, both considerably smaller, have gone for of late.

The business is being sold six times what it brings in

to GGT in profits each year — after any bonuses have been paid to staff. No one is saying how much these are, which would seem to tell its own story. Financial Dynamics was the centre of a nasty insider trading scandal a while back, but this has not diminished revenues greatly. I am assured, and the company remains one of the two or three biggest players in its chosen field. GGT shareholders really should ask the company why it is going so cheaply.

□ TONY HILL, the engaging chief executive of SEI Group (formerly Surrey Free Inns), is turning to some interesting buildings as he rolls out the Bar Med concept, a sort of music café. I am told. One of the new will open in what was formerly a jobcentre in Cardiff. "A brilliant way of really making jobcentres create employment," he claims.

### Crime pays

THEY catch up with all the old laws eventually. Michael Howard, former Home Secretary, has lined up his first ever non-executive posts. He is joining Impax, an American business with headquarters in Florida and Dublin, as a non-executive director and roving ambassador. His CV, provided by the firm, includes what must be the most, or, at least, one in any such resume I have seen: "He was Home Secre-

tary 1993-97, during which time the crime rate fell by 15 per cent." Impac, I am surprised to learn, awards the biggest annual literary prize on offer, the £100,000 International Impac Dublin Literary Award for any work of fiction in the English language. Never heard of it, but well done. Perhaps they could take literary tips, because the firm describes itself as one of the world's leading "management productivity enhancement companies". They mean management consultants.

I ask Howard, who is also joining the board of David Institute, a maker of labels, if he has read any of this year's shortlist, which includes Margaret Atwood and Anita Brookner. "I don't think I have. Yet." Fielded like a true politician.

MARTIN WALLER



First two non-executive posts for Michael Howard

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# ACCOUNTANCY

## Quest for one clear picture

**Robert Hodgkinson on the new consensus for a single statement on a company's financial performance**

Last week, a radical new consensus emerged from a debate at the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales. A new single statement of financial performance should replace the profit and loss account and the statement of total recognised gains and losses (STRGL). The institute's financial reporting committee and the London Society of Chartered Accountants hosted the debate.

Recent US and international accounting standards give more prominence to gains and losses falling outside the traditional profit and loss account (or income statement). Back in 1992, the UK's Accounting Standards Board (ASB) led the way with FR3 Reporting financial performance. This introduced the STRGL to reflect items such as asset revaluations and currency movements that bypassed a profit and loss account. The ASB will this year start to review FR3 and it has joined other standard-setters in publishing Reporting Financial Performance: Current Developments and Future Directions.

This study by the G4+1 group of standard-setters argues that apart from dividends and other transactions with shareholders,

all changes in net assets of a business reflect financial performance and should be reported in a single statement. This would mean transforming the profit and loss account and abandoning the STRGL and other second performance statements. Most of the G4+1 group would like to carve a single statement into three parts: operating, financing and other. A single statement would give investors a comprehensive starting point for analysis and let directors get on with improving performance instead of fretting about which statement it gets reported in. The proposals would enhance standard-setting in difficult areas such as derivatives. So long as there is a second statement, decisions on how to recognise changes in assets and liabilities can be judged by relegating them from the profit and loss account.

At the debate, G4+1 was summarised by its co-author, Andrew Lennard, of the ASB. He was broadly supported by Peter Holgate who chaired a group drawn from the institute's financial reporting committee, which last October issued Reporting Performance — Is there a Role for Second Performance Statements? The



Robert Hodgkinson says all parties must put their views

group answered its own question with a resounding "No".

However, while many in the audience backed these conclusions, it would be naive to think that such consensus will translate easily into domestic, let alone worldwide, reform. Potential problems run deeper than

just changing the profit and loss account formats enshrined in law.

Some users feel insulted by suggestions that they cannot see beyond the profit and loss account. However, as Nigel Dealy, of the London Society's technical committee, pointed

out, the STRGL was a response to the "Polly Peck Syndrome". Subsequent experience suggests that continuing to report losses outside the main performance statement is tempting fate.

Some traditionalists will want to preserve a net profit number safely realised and based on historical cost. Pragmatists may wish to include it in the single statement. However, purists and preparers are likely to see that as compromising the format of a single statement, making it a multi-column maze.

Debate found other potential discord in the "new consensus". The G4+1 study says that it is essentially only operating performance that is actively managed; other gains or losses are more random. So, the ASB sees the total at the foot of a single statement as meaningless and is scornful of summary measures. By contrast, the institute paper sees directors as responsible for the new bottom line and argues that total performance and its composition should be the focus of management comment.

In reviewing FR3, the ASB will lead the world in trying to achieve a single statement of financial performance. Investors, analysts and preparers need to get involved. Comments on the institute paper should be addressed to Robert Langford.

The author, a partner in Arthur Andersen's UK Professional Standards Group, chairs the English ICA's Financial Reporting Committee

## Mega-merger dream faces culture clash

UNLESS utter exhaustion has set in through their constant criss-crossing of the Atlantic, the senior partners of the firms seeking mega-mergers may now be realising the full extent of what they have unleashed.

This week the focus has turned to Europe. The competition authorities, as expected, have taken the merger proposal of Price Waterhouse and Coopers & Lybrand to a second stage. This puts the chance of a decision back until May. For the firms, as they scramble to organise the shape of their global structures, that is no surprise and is, in some ways, a relief. It gives them more time to get everything straight and as many people as possible facing in the right direction.

What they may not have realised is that it also gives the rest of the world time to reassess what is going on. In particular, this is crucial in Europe. On the Continent, there is little tradition of the big accountancy firms. It is a cultural thing. In the UK, the US and the old Commonwealth countries, the big accountancy

firms have always been one of cultural differences lovingly honed. The business community is realising that the accountancy firms have undermined all that. They had never paid too much attention to accountants. Accountants in Europe have traditionally been a small elite, not the all-conquering hordes that they are in America or the UK. It is now dawning on the Europeans that the future will be different, unless Brussels can be persuaded to regulate otherwise. Last week's debate in the European Parliament underlined this. One Euro-MP argued that the competition authorities should insist that the number of the big firms is never allowed to fall below five. "There is," one old Brussels hand said last week, "a lot of lobbying going on."

The other consequence that the big firms may not have foreseen is that their merger plans could become mired in Brussels politics. Karel van Miert, the EU Competition Commissioner, has his eye on the top job when Jacques Santer steps down. So he needs a high



ROBERT BRUCE

profile, and is itching to get stuck into the mergers. At this stage, the simple case of mergers expands. The European Commission is also involved in the whole business of how European companies gain listings on US stock markets. Suddenly, the mergers become the key to regulating the securities markets, and, because people have woken up to implications for the legal profession, they become the key to regulating the legal field, too.

It is a far cry from the simple aim of raising cash to invest in Chinese markets, which the firms initially suggested was their motivation. There is a severe chance that the firms are suddenly

finding themselves out of their depth. Van Miert, the smart money in Brussels is saying, will have to stop one and block the other. This scenario for the firms would be disastrous. There is no doubt that the Price Waterhouse and Coopers & Lybrand merger proposal is more complete and competent than that of KPMG and Ernst & Young. So Brussels, it is suggested, would simply knock the KPMG/Ernst effort on the head and tell PW and Coopers to come back in three years and use that time to get organised.

None of this may have crossed senior partners' minds when they set the juggernaut in train. However, as one Brussels-based accountant told me last week: "We do seem to have just annoyed a lot of people."

### High-flyer's prophecy

WHEN the proposed merger of KPMG and Ernst & Young was announced last year, Nick Land, E&Y's senior partner, produced what is now seen to be the only accurate prophecy of the day. Asked who would be the winners in the merger, he answered — with endearing simplicity — "the airlines".

But he was absolutely right. One senior Deloitte & Touche partner, who was

### NUMBER BUSINESS

flying to New York late last week, reports that almost the entire aircraft was filled with people from the Big Six firms. But all was not bad. "We had a very good time indeed," he said.

#### Numbers game

IN THE European Parliament last week Edward Kellert-Bowman, the Conservative Euro-MP for Ichen, Test and Avon, made

an impassioned attack on the large accountancy firms.

He urged the European Commission, in its deliberations over the proposed mega-mergers in the profession, to fix an absolute limit on the number of top firms, for example.

This should not be allowed to fall below a minimum of five, he insisted. He is well placed to argue this. At least one of his children works for a current Big Six firm.

#### Treasury trouble

MORE trouble for the Treasury. The assertion mooted by the Accounting Standards Board late last year that the Private Finance Initiative looked very similar to the old off-balance sheet financing scam, which the ASB managed — with Government encouragement — to stamp out in the early 1990s, is gaining support.

In tomorrow's edition of Public Finance, Martin Evans, the policy director of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance Accountants — CIPFA, the public sector accounting body — suggests that as the ASB is the ultimate guardian of the UK's accounting rules "the Treasury cannot pick and choose which bits to apply and discard".

Rumour has it that the House of Commons Treasury Committee has also pricked up an ear at the sounds of battle and is thinking of calling for a hearing.

ROBERT BRUCE

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# He shoots, he scores, he runs people over...

Football hard man Vinnie Jones tells Alex Wijeratne about his first film role: a non-footballing hard man

Vinnie Jones is doing a Cantona and breaking into films. Is he serious? "Very," he says, having finished six weeks of acting in a modern British gangster film called *Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels*. As one might imagine, the hard-man captain of Wimbledon FC plays a hard man — Big Chris, an East End gangland debt collector-cum-enforcer with a thing for respect and Holland & Holland silver 12-bore shotguns. Shooters aside, the casting of the 33-year-old Jones could hardly be more appropriate. This is the man before whom strong strikers quake, the darling of those referees who consider their day wasted if they have not added to their collection of miscreants' names. His disciplinary record speaks for itself — quickest booking (five seconds); 13 red cards (one rescinded); total fines £26,250. Off the field, he was once associated with a video called *Soccer's Hard Men* which, his detractors said, glorified on-pitch violence. He was fined for that, too. And what about the time he bit a journalist's nose?

Now Jones is turning multimedia. He has a chat show on the satellite channel Granada Plus; he guests on David Mellor's classical music slot on Classic FM; and he talks of co-hosting a countryside magazine on terrestrial TV with Tara Palmer-Tomkinson. It is movies, though, that could be the real money. He turned down three scripts, he says, before director Guy Ritchie's £25 million urban thriller hit the level. "The other films were me just being a headcase," Jones says. "I didn't want to be a gimmick. I didn't want a walk-on, walk-off part."

So Big Chris is no psycho? "He's not a head case at all.

He's very controlled, very cool, very particular. In one scene he gets into a car and a seedy villain has a knife to Chris's little boy's throat. All Chris says is, "You alright?" to his son. He's got a cool nerve. You want to have a bit of class about you."

Head case or not, the scene spirals into ultra-violence. Jones played it out unhearsedly. "I said, 'Get this right, you're not going into rehearsal. I'm just gonna do it like when it comes to kick-off time in football.'"

**"I couldn't do the roles Cantona does. There are clothes I wouldn't wear"**

He recalls the carnage: "I drive down the road, go up to top speed, smash into another car, the villain comes shooting over my shoulder, I give him a good bashing, drag him out so his head is hanging out the car. Then I teach him a lesson, and smash him to bits." And the on-set reaction? "There were a few open mouths. Then everyone burst into applause."

Jones had no acting lessons and says that any nerves he may have had settled down after his first scene — roughing up a client in a solarium. "Once I had done it I was away with the mixer. I thought, 'It's not as hard as people think.'"

I wondered if he was qualified for Bernadette gangland scenes, when he grew up in a bedsit in a softer manor be-

tween Watford and Hemel Hempstead. "That's where people are wrong," he says as we talk in the conservatory of his self-built farm-ranch near Redbourn in Hertfordshire, where he keeps 20 chickens, geese, six dogs, three ferrets, ducks and Vietnamese pot-bellied pigs. "This way is full of East Enders. They've all got East London contacts."

He continues the theme. "I was educated on the street. I'm streetwise, and when we were growing up that's what we did. But if you ask have I ever smashed anybody's head to bits with a car, no I haven't."

He is not the first footballer to try the movies. Others — such as Leslie Banks in *The Arsenal Stadium Mystery* (1939), George Best in *Percy* (1971), Bobby Moore and Pelé in *Escape to Victory* (1981) — starred in poor-to-mesure football-related stories.

But it was Eric Cantona, the French former Manchester United midfielder philosopher, who last year led the way towards the meatier stuff, taking roles alongside Jake La Motta in a boxing film, *Question d'Honneur*, and playing a French ambassador in a feature-length costume drama, *Elizabeth I*. "I wouldn't be able to do what Cantona is doing," Jones says. "I couldn't play those roles. There are certain clothes I wouldn't wear," Jones, instead, is purely after action. He is no film buff, although he liked *Trainspotting*.

Now Hollywood is beckoning the hard man of Selhurst Park. "In this country I'm Vinnie Jones the footballer," he says. "In America they're not going to know that. They're going to say, 'Christ, this guy can act. We want him in our film.' So much has happened in the past two years that if Steven Spielberg rang me up, I wouldn't be surprised."



"I was educated on the street," film star Vinnie Jones says, "but if you ask have I ever smashed anybody's head to bits with a car, no I haven't"

## Gloom has never been more lovely

**CLOUDS**  
*Tarzan, PG, 1996*  
AKI KAURISMAKI'S tale of a married couple fighting the recession features the Finnish director's trademark melancholy and absurdist humour. It is also, unusually, suffused with tenderness and stylised colours (sky blue predominating). There is even an optimis-

tic ending. A restaurant hostess loses her job so does her train-driving husband. Along with their dog, they face hardship with long, brave faces in dismal rooms given a fairylike glow by the bold, simple colours. A lovely film.

**GET ON THE BUS**  
*Columbia TriStar, 15, 1997*  
SPIKE LEE's contentious film follows some 20 African American males travelling from LA to Washington DC to attend the Million Man March in 1995. Characters include a braggart actor, a gay couple, a Black Muslim, a film student, a father and son shackled together by a court order and an old-timer called Jeremiah (Ossie Davis) fond of dispensing wise words. He is not alone everyone talks effusively as they fraternise, antagonise and explore social

conditions. For a while the film's passion is appealing. Then the characters' jousting becomes too schematic, the debate turns to speechifying, and tear-jerking melodrama intrudes. A rental release.

**THE LOST WORLD: JURASSIC PARK**  
*CIC, PG, 1997*  
THE Jurassic Park dinosaurs return to your living room, chewing up more human beings in the sequel to the 1993 colossus. The novelty of the special effects has worn off and the script makes little attempt to hide its formula nature. Jeff Goldblum returns as the quirky chaos mathematician Ian Malcolm, upgraded from comic commentator to leading man. Julianne Moore,

is his paleontologist girlfriend, a dinosaur's meal in waiting. At the moment the movie is only available to rent; you can buy copies from the middle of March.

**THE PALLBEARER**  
*Buena Vista, 12, 1996*  
DAVID SCHWIMMER from *Friends* takes the lead role in this comedy of embarrassment about a college graduate whose difficulties while growing up increase once he agrees to be a pallbearer for a classmate he cannot remember. A notable cast — Barbara Hershey, Gwyneth Paltrow, Toni Collette — does its best to keep us entertained, although one grows tired of the characters' wilful behaviour. A first film by writer-director Matt

Reeves, released straight to rental video.

**STAGE DOOR CANTEN**  
*Eureka, 1943, U*  
AT THE Stage Door Canteen, just off Broadway, soldiers waiting for the call to fight overseas find new sweethearts while, all around them, stars big and small of stage, screen and radio entertain, wash dishes and offer friendly advice. Such is the gist of this mammoth wartime musical. Its low point may be Gracie Fields at her most resistible, singing an awful setting of the Lord's Prayer: its high point may be Ray Bolger's splendid dancing. Far too long at two hours and ten minutes, but if you want a period relic, this is a biggie.

GEOFF BROWN

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### Oriental sound

**MUSICALS:** The hottest ticket in Beijing? Undoubtedly it is the new, bilingual production of *The Sound of Music*. The Oriental Song and Dance Ensemble of China is staging the syrupy epic with the Chinese pop star Cheng Fangyuan as Maria. The musical has been mostly translated into Chinese, although some songs remain in English. Perhaps there is no easy way of rendering "doh a deer, a female deer" into Mandarin.

**AWARDS:** With seven nominations, the West End production of the Kander and Ebb musical *Chicago* looks set to triumph at this year's Olivier Awards, to be presented at the Albery on February 16 and broadcast by BBC2 on February 23. Another song-and-dance show, *Lady in the Dark*, has garnered five nominations, including "best new musical" — somewhat odd, since Weill, Gershwin and Hart wrote the show some 57 years ago.

**POP:** Garth Brooks is the latest musician to be accused of plagiarism. The country star's lawyers settled a \$5 million lawsuit last week, just before the case was due in court in Los Angeles. He had been accused by Guy Thomas of basing his 1995 hit *Standing Outside the Fire* on a Thomas song. Asked if the suit had damaged his reputation, Brooks replied: "No sir. These things happen every day. But most of them just don't get this far."

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# Tragedy replayed as epic spectacle

## NEW MOVIES:

*Titanic* has the power to 'shake us and touch the soul', writes

Geoff Brown

**K**ate Winslet and Leonardo DiCaprio are smooching up deck and down on a large ocean liner, the *Titanic*, by name, as it glides across the Atlantic. She's Rose De Witt Bukater, an upper-class Philadelphia girl journeying back with her mother to a financially advantageous marriage. He's Jack Dawson, a hobo with an artistic gift, a ready smile, and no thought to tomorrow, travelling in steerage.

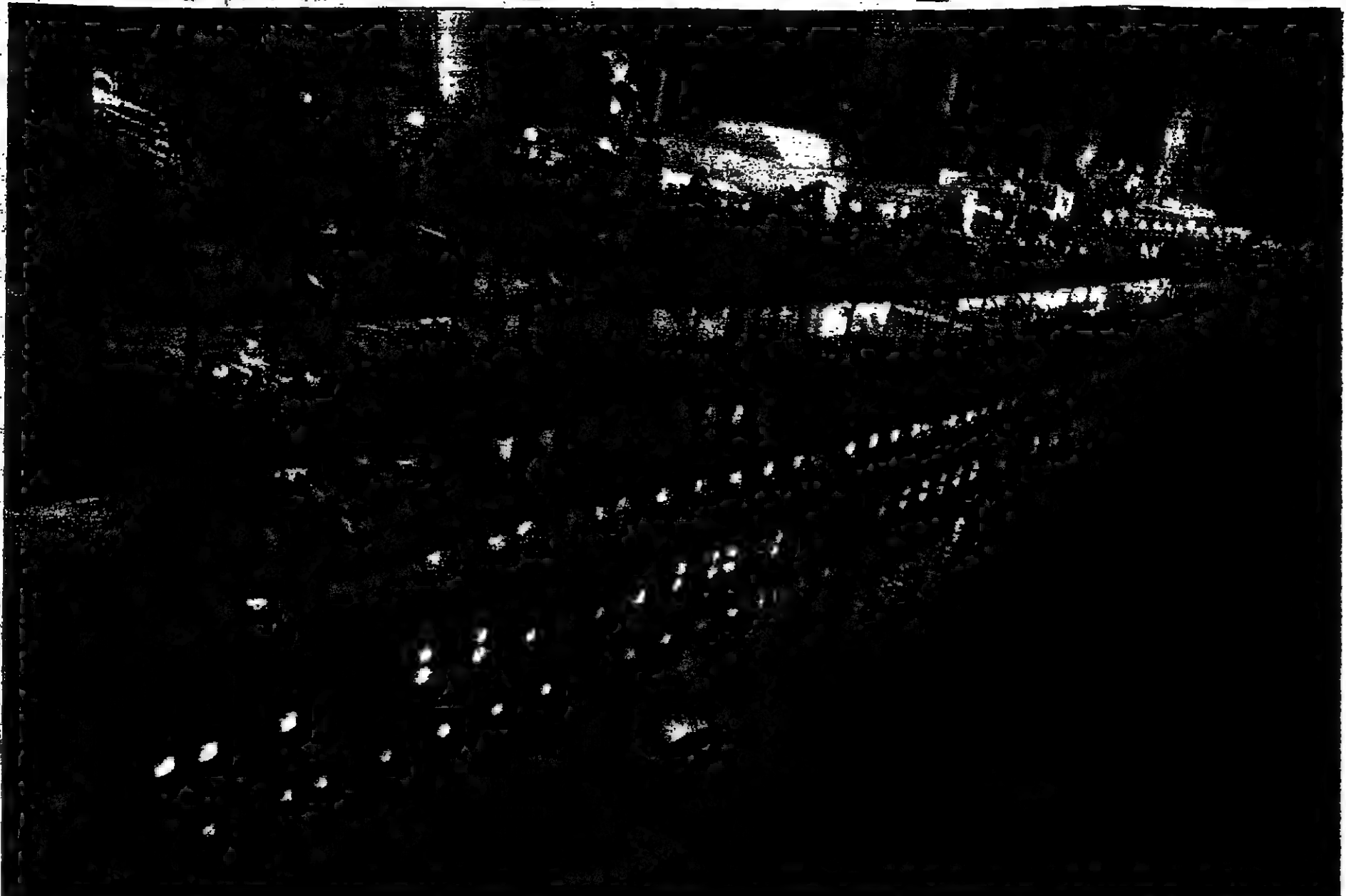
They stand at the prow before the setting sun; they run full tilt through the engine room; they make love in a plush car stowed in the hold, and raise the ire of ship society, especially Rose's attendant fiancé (Billy Zane). Rose and Jack are young and attractive, but their billing and cooing does take some time. "Come on, iceberg," you feel like saying. "Hurry up!"

When the iceberg arrives, after 100 minutes it looks peculiarly insubstantial, almost made of cardboard. Yet that is the only major visual shortcoming in *Titanic*, a film that otherwise sets new standards in special effects and Hollywood spectacle. No model ship bobbing in a tank was going to satisfy James Cameron, the exacting director of *Terminator 2* and *True Lies*. So, 30 miles south of San Diego, on the Mexican coast, he built a staggeringly detailed, 75ft replica of the White Star Line's pride and joy, only to break it in two, as history demanded, and sink it.

Such extravagance comes with a price tag, in this case \$200 million — bigger than any attached to a movie before. It took two big studios, Twentieth Century Fox and Paramount Pictures, to foot the bill and meet the payroll: the end credits of cast and crew list over 1,100 names.

Given enough time, money and skills, *Titanic* was always going to look impressive. And so it does, dwarfing that honourable British account, *A Night to Remember*, which did well by the standards of 1958. But after the fuss has abated, such films live or die through their characters and the emotions stirred. On board the *Titanic* on that fateful voyage in April 1912 were 2,200 passengers. We get stuck, mostly, with two fictional creatures of limited interest.

No young American actor today is more equipped than Leonardo DiCaprio for standing at the ship's prow, arms outstretched, gleefully yelling:



With his \$200 million budget the director James Cameron built a remarkably detailed 75ft replica of the *Titanic* — only to break it in two, as history demanded, and sink it

"I'm the king of the world!" But there is only so much cocksure grinning one movie can stand, especially if there is nothing much in the script to back up the dental display.

Winslet's character is more substantial: she has a mother (Frances Fisher), to rebuke, a fiancé to joust with, inner fires to ignite. Yet as the waters inside and the ship slides down, you beg the film to find someone other than this Edwardian Romeo and Juliet.

**T**oo often, the camera's response is to turn towards Billy Zane and his benchman valet David Warner, so obsessed with the status quo that they aim pistols at DiCaprio's interloper even when water laps around their ears. Zane's character, in fact, behaves like a villain in a 19th-century melodrama. But then Cameron's entire script delights in broad strokes. The upper decks are unbending, sufficed shirts, holding icy conversations at dinner; for real human life, the film insists, you must go down below and join the knees-up in steerage.

The English officers, who

main the *Titanic* are also part of the film's class war. They 'snap out their orders' — "Put that down!" "You can't do that!" — as the horde struggle to break free from the bowels of the ship and join the lifeboats' glittered. Class distinction was rife aboard the *Titanic*, but Cameron certainly milks it.

Yet for all the sluggish script and the enormous weight of the special effects, this movie behemoth still has the power to shake us rigid and touch the soul. Our hearts are stirred especially by the Hollywood veteran Gloria Stuart, cast as Rose in extreme old age, who is summoned to tell her story to the aquatic fortune hunters, met at the start, prowling the *Titanic's* remains for missing diamonds.

Stuart, erstwhile star of *The Invisible Man*, *Gold Diggers of 1933* and others, has not acted in films since 1946, but her skills have matured wonderfully: she vaults over the unlikelyhood of a 102-year-old Titanic survivor being so spry, and draws us right into the overwhelming tragedy, the pain and loss, at the heart of the *Titanic* story. If you care at

**Titanic**  
Odeon Leicester Square,  
12, 195 mins  
Intensely  
overwhelming epic

**The Winner**  
ABC Shaftesbury Ave. 15,  
84 mins  
Tiresome tale of losers

**I Went Down**  
Warner West End, 15,  
106 mins  
Irish gangster caper

**Breaking Up**  
Warner West End, 15,  
105 mins  
Trivial comedy

**Das Boot: The Director's Cut**  
Plaza, 15, 209 mins  
The 1981 U-boat drama  
sails again

**Lucie Aubrac**  
Curzon Mayfair, 12,  
115 mins  
Deadly dull drama  
of the French  
Resistance

**Up 'n' Under**  
Odeon West End, 12,  
98 mins  
No goals scored in  
John Godber's rugby  
comedy

all for Rose and Jack, it is because of Gloria Stuart, not Winslet or DiCaprio.

The spectacle itself is at times undeniably moving. The ship splitting in two; the passengers helplessly numbing down the decks as it plunges vertically into the depths; those in the ferocious cold water, clinging to anything floating, with nothing to do but wait for death: these are sights never staged before with such realism and power. When it works, *Titanic* works magnificently; when it doesn't, you try to be patient and bide your time. Full steam ahead now for the Oscars.

In a week engulfed by *Titanic* it is healthy to remember there are other kinds of cinema. Go one weekend to the Artists' Studios and Gallery at 185 Vauxhall Street, London SE11, and you will currently find exhibited *Diary*, a haunting short film by Peter Todd, crafter of poetic rumina-

tions about ordinary life. Cameron employed some 1,100 people; Todd used three crew members, plus four actors, who receive their onscreen credit on the back of a torn envelope — a bill, most likely.

Todd's own bill was £2,000: still big enough, you might think, for a shooting film barely seven minutes long. No special effects: just a camera trained on nondescript surroundings, made poignant by the soundtrack's melody of voices and the director's sensitivity to the layers of emotions that shape the most ordinary of lives.

One movie of the week dares to be longer than *Titanic*. This is *Das Boot: The Director's Cut*, Wolfgang Petersen's U-boat epic of 1981, re-released with an extra hour of footage and a significantly enhanced soundtrack. For three and a half hours we join captain Jürgen Prochnow in 1941, struggling across the North

Atlantic with a crew of inexperienced recruits. This is a long time to spend underwater biting your nails, but Petersen, now riding high in Hollywood, maintains tension to a surprising degree.

Some films deserve to be drowned in the wake of *Titanic*, which may be what their distributors intended. The Winner was disowned by its director, the wandering Brit Alex Cox, after re-editing by the producers. Even if Cox's cut survived, we would still be faced with an unfunny, inconsequential tale about scoundrels and losers in Las Vegas, with a cast deserving far better material (Vincent D'Onofrio, Rebecca DeMornay, Delroy Lindo, Michael Madsen).

And who cares a hoot about *Breaking Up*, a trivial comedy about the ups and downs — downs, mostly — in the relationship between Salma Hayek, schoolteacher, and Russell Crowe, food photographer? They make love, they argue and break up; they twiddle their thumbs and wait by their phones. Neither cast nor director (Robert Greenwald) can make any of this enthralling.

Other films imagine themselves, wrongly, to be works of substance. Lucie Aubrac, directed by Claude Berri, navigates a true-life drama of the French Resistance with such dull restraint that you want to scream. If only the characters did too. But Carole Bouquet is maddeningly composed as the wife engineering her husband's escape from the Gestapo, and co-star Daniel Auteuil is too noble to make any fuss.

Then we find *I Went Down*, an Irish film, written by hot playwright Conor McPherson and directed by Paddy Breathnach. It fancies itself as a gangster caper but, bright moments acknowledged, lacks the sharp wit to sustain the blunderings of Peter McDonald and Brendan Gleeson, two crooks in search of another.

The laughter quotient is far lower, though, in *Up 'n' Under*, John Godber's dingy adaptation of his venerable play about rival amateur rugby teams. The self-fulfillment theme echoes *The Full Monty*, but that film's skill is notably absent. Gary Olsen, Neil Morrissey and Samantha Janus head the cast condemned to flog a dead horse.

## SNAP VERDICT

'An ocean of nonsense'

Every week young film fans discuss the latest releases...

### TITANIC

Leslie Isaiah Thomas, 20: A clumsily scripted movie with atrocious dialogue. The one thing that you would expect of this movie is spectacle. Yet curiously, it seems no more spectacular than an episode of *Emmerdale*.

Carl Clark, 19: Remember that silly Tom Cruise movie, *Far and Away*? Well, this has exactly the same story but it's set at sea. The only good thing about the film is Kate Winslet, who reigns supreme in an ocean of nonsense.

Laura Brook, 19: Big is not necessarily better. This movie left me cold — like ice. *Titanic* certainly doesn't live up to the hype.

Emma Ralph, 19: Leonardo DiCaprio looks like a sprout.

### I WENT DOWN

Leslie: The actor Peter McDonald makes one of the most accomplished screen debuts I have ever seen. Carl: A gangster movie with quirky humour. Tarantino's *Reservoir Dogs* revisited.

Laura: Peter McDonald is exceptional and quite brilliant. A very gentle comedy thriller — I really loved it. Emma: Yet another *Pulp Fiction* wannabe. Boring. It's about time film-makers broke free from Tarantino's influence.

### BREAKING UP

Leslie: Neither Russell Crowe nor Salma Hayek is attractive enough or interesting enough to keep your attention for 90 minutes.

Carl: A romantic comedy that is neither romantic nor comedic. One to avoid at all costs.

Laura: An early contender for worst film of the year. It will please no-one. Emma: Less entertaining than watching paint dry. Stay away — it's not worth wasting your money.

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# Preposterous pleasures



Joanna Pearce (Imogen), Guy Henry (Cloten) and Paul Freeman (Iachimo) in the RSC's new staging of *Cymbeline*

This was the play that provoked Shaw to declare that, with the one exception of Homer, Shakespeare was the writer he most despised when he compared his mind to his own. It was, he said, stagey trash: "vulgar, foolish, offensive, indecent and exasperating beyond tolerance".

To which I can only reply that, yes, it would have been nice if the Bard had workshopped the piece before giving it the go-ahead at the Globe, but that I would rather see Adrian Noble's RSC production of *Cymbeline* than anybody's revival of *Getting*

white figures cluster round a flame to hear a soothsayer relate the key facts. That instantly establishes tone, mood and genre.

It occurs in England and Italy, and AD10; but there is no wood, no clanking Roman armour, no Boadicea chic. Below the giant salt that curves above a bare stage, we get Cornucopian figures in black silhouettes and, at one point, what seem to be "Two Little Maids from school tripping

along, presumably in search of their triplet. Even the Roman robes owe less to Ben Hur than to *The Mikado*. Everything is Oriental, from the staves and flags in the big battle to the Japanese silhouettes behind. It is eccentric, but the result is a kind of exotic simplicity that suits the play.

And even Shaw had to admit that the play has some fine characters. There is Imogen, "an enchanting person," vastly spunkier than

Miranda. Perdita or even Mariana, and there is Cloten, "the prince of numbskulls," who rapaciously pursues her after her husband has been banished. At the Barbican, both are notably well played: she by Joanna Pearce with great warmth and spirit, he by Guy Henry, not as the usual uppity, crusty Caliban, but as a natural Aguecheek convinced he is a blend of "Cicero and Mercutio."

With Paul Freeman playing the Italian cad, "yellow lachimo," and Edward Petherbridge bringing a fumed-out vulnerability to the most underwritten of all Shakespeare's title characters, this is an invigorating reclamation of a tricky play. Only Shaw would have remained unconvinced. Poor old egghead, he lacked the necessary blend of fun and wonder.

BENEDICT NIGHTINGALE

## Cymbeline

Married, Misalliance or half-a-dozen Shavian teach-ins. Why? The play is melodramatic and it is preposterous. As Shaw gleefully pointed out, it contains a scene in which the heroine awakens from supposed death to find herself clutching a headless corpse she thinks is her husband; and, as he didn't, the complications surrounding this event take 20 minutes of last-act explanation to clear up. Yet in *Cymbeline* there are many of those elements that were to make Shakespeare's other late romances so distinctive: a heroine of surpassing virtue, a difficult father, evil in high places, desperate separations, glorious reconciliations, a state visit from Mount Olympus, pardon, joy.

The play is a trial run for *The Winter's Tale* and *The Tempest*. If it cannot match them for emotional reality, it offers rewards apparent at the very start of Noble's production. Gone is the plodding exegesis in which Gent A tells Gent B what he should already know. Instead, cowed

## Life stuck in a groove

A suicidal DJ is masses of ceremonies at a roadshow that time forgot. He sits beside an old record deck playing cheesy Hawaiian music at three revolutions per minute and murmurs old news items into his microphone in a velvet voice. A woman half-dressed in a wedding gown chucks up saucy messages on a blackboard. An actor with a pantomime home on his head opens and closes curtains. And two girls in black bikinis and grass skirts hula in time to the music, which is very slow hula-ing indeed.

Welcome to the world of Forced Entertainment, who have been turning these sorts of tricks for the past 14 years, yet like some frustrated Britpop band have still to arrive. Maybe their time has come. Their latest piece, *Pleasure*, is hardly the *Chris Evans Breakfast Show*, but substantial chunks of it are cleverly unhinged.

Such is the dire state of DJ's non sequiturs that in order to change the mood he ties a red bandanna over his

## On an individual note

AS PROGRAMME changes go, this came exceptionally late. It was not until David Newton arrived at the piano that we learnt that his partner for the evening, the saxophonist Alan Barnes, had been delayed in Germany. This was a disappointment, since the pair had been scheduled to give a performance of the music of the late Gerry Mulligan. The prospect of two of this country's finest, if more unashamed, musicians honouring one of jazz's most underrated talents had been a very tempting one. Yet by the time the musicians had reached the closing bars of the first tune, we were making the most of the unexpected opportunity to catch the saxophonist, Iain Dixon. Newton, accompanied so many world-class players that he must be used to having the limelight stolen from him. At a time when so many tenor saxophonists have a disarming habit of sounding virtually interchangeable, Dixon possesses the rare gift of an individual signature. Where others rely on bombast and dazzling quick fingering, he soothes and cajoles. The long, serpentine lines are reminiscent of altoist Lee Konitz; the tone has something of Stan Getz's warmth, although without the heart-on-sleeve romanticism.

Dixon switched to soprano saxo-

## JAZZ

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CLIVE DAVIS

### LONDON

**THE DAY I STOOD STILL:** National debut for Kevin Elyot, author of the excellent *My Night with Reg*. Ian Rickson directs his new play, arching the years from 1950s economics to a current consequence today. National (Cottesloe), South Bank, SE1 (0171-428 2521). Opens tonight, 7pm, in repertory.

**PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA:** The orchestra's winter season gets under way as the excellent Russian pianist Evgeny Kissin joins his compatriot Vladimir Ashkenazy, himself an undoubted pianist but here wearing his conductor's hat in a performance of Brahms's Piano Concerto No 1. This is followed by Dvorak's dramatic Seventh Symphony. Festival Hall, South Bank, SE1 (0171-428 4242). Tonight, 7.30pm.

**TERMS OF ABUSE:** The New Directors season opens with a play by Jez Butterworth, the stunning work of a central killer defines the police and tells the post-war story. Julia-Archie Polunin directs. Hampstead Theatre, Swiss Cottage, NW3 (0171-222 5501). Preview from tonight, 8pm. Opens 7.45pm, then Mon-Sat, 8pm, Sat, 3.30pm.

**SONG RECITAL:** London debut for the American soprano Jennifer Bales. Her chosen programme features songs by Barber, Pauline, Clara Schumann, Schubert and George Crumb. She is accompanied by the distinguished pianist David Owen Norris. St John's Smith Square, SW1 (0171-232 1061). Tonight, 7.30pm.

### ELSEWHERE

**BRACKNELL:** Janet Sutherland directs *The Snow Palace*, a new play by Caryl Churchill. The play is about the story of a Polish playwright P. Stanislawski (1900-24), who was killed by the Nazis. The play is set in the French Revolution, both of which feature

**THE CHAIRS:** Richard Briers and Joanna Pearce in a new play by Caryl Churchill. The play is about the story of a Polish playwright P. Stanislawski (1900-24), who was killed by the Nazis. The play is set in the French Revolution, both of which feature

### NEW RELEASES

**BATTLESHIP POTEMKIN:** Eisenstein's masterpiece of Russian cinema, a masterpiece of Russian cinema, a masterpiece of Russian cinema. (0171-222 5501).

**BRING ME THE HEAD OF ALFRED HITCHCOCK:** A record producer in a hurry to make a record, a record producer in a hurry to make a record. (0171-222 5501).

**BOOGIE NIGHTS:** A record producer in a hurry to make a record, a record producer in a hurry to make a record. (0171-222 5501).

**DEVIL'S WILLOW:** A record producer in a hurry to make a record, a record producer in a hurry to make a record. (0171-222 5501).

**PRETTY VILLAGE PRETTY FLAME:** A record producer in a hurry to make a record, a record producer in a hurry to make a record. (0171-222 5501).

**CURRENT:** A record producer in a hurry to make a record, a record producer in a hurry to make a record. (0171-222 5501).

### TODAY'S CHOICE

A daily guide to arts and entertainment compiled by Mark Hargreaves

**IN THE PLAY:** Young for Spheres Theatre Company. White Theatre, Brompton Arts Centre, South Hill Park, W11 4JH. Tonight, 7.30pm.

### LONDON GALLERIES

**Barthelme Shaker:** The Art of Contemporary. (0171-428 2521).

**British Museum:** Islamic and Indian. (0171-428 2521).

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### THEATRE GUIDE

**Jeremy Kingston's assessment of theatre showing in London**

**House full, returns only**

**House empty, returns only**

**Seats at all prices**

### CINEMA GUIDE

**4214 Marble Arch:** (0171-222 5501).

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### GLASGOW

Rising star on the musical firmament 22-year-old Daniel Harding conducts the Royal Scottish Orchestra in a performance of *The Rite of Spring*. Shaw'sley a epic portrayal of ancient ritual life. The programme features Debussy's Images and James MacMillan's piano concerto, The Bunting, depicting turbulent Celtic warriors. Peter Donohoe is the piano soloist. Royal Concert Hall, 2 Sauchiehall Street, (0141-287 5511). Tonight, 7.30pm.

### SALISBURY

Salisbury: Jasper Britton and Joyce Ashurst play the star-crossed lovers in Jonathan Church's five-month tour of Romeo and Juliet starting here. With Dudley Sutton as Friar Lawrence and Josephine Turner as the Nurse. Playhouse, Malpas Lane, (01722 322323). Preview tonight, 8pm. Opens Jan 28, 7.30pm. Then Mon-Sat, 7.30pm, Sun-Sat 3pm. Tue-Sat 7.30pm, Wed-Sat 7.30pm, Thu-Sat 7.30pm, Fri-Sat 7.30pm, Sat 7.30pm, Sun 3pm.

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### ART GALLERIES

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# The state of the Union

Inventing America at the Barbican has everything — including the Minnesota Orchestra. Hilary Finch reports

Inventing America. It began as event and soon became metaphor. Lefthanded, Eriksson sailed from Iceland to his New Found Land of vines, milk and honey, and in no time at all, England's metaphysical poets were apostrophising their lovers as "my America, my new found land".

It was reinvented, time and again, in the pioneering innocence of lumberjack Paul Bunyan, in Melville's dark experience, and in the search for brave new worlds of the spirit in Emerson and Thoreau, Ives and Copland, Hopper and Rockefeller. And now the great American dream is being reinvented once again in a year of movies, Shakers, minimalism, movies, dance, opera and drama, starting at the Barbican this weekend.

It may not be playing any Bach, but when the Minnesota Orchestra makes its first ever visit to London next month as part of the first European tour in its 95-year history, the Barbican will hear the music of a striking three-part invention. Minnesota: clear, shining water; Minnehaha: laughing water; and Minneapolis: that grand conjunction of Indian and Greek nomenclature which has identified a city of lakes at the very heart of America which, hubris apart, rather likes to think of itself as the Athens of the States.

Tyrene Guthrie founded his theatre (one of 43 companies) there. Judy Garland, Scott Fitzgerald, Bob Dylan and Paul Bunyan himself were all born there. What need for further credentials?

Well, Dvorak chose to invent his "American" Quartet while perched perilously on a rock above the city's Minnehaha Falls. And Garrison Keillor, who visits the Barbican on March 9, continues to

● The director of the Royal Opera's new *Le nozze di Figaro* is Patrick Young, not Patrick Mason as stated in yesterday's review.

invent and reinvent his Lake Wobegon community of saltfish-eating, hymn-singing Scandinavian emigrants in that fusion of laconic self-deprecation and sentimentality — a sort of *Under Milk Wood* on Prozac — which is his radio show. Meanwhile the orchestra straddles the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and Saint Paul, playing 200 concerts a year on a budget recently yanked up to \$25 million.

United it stands, but divided it very nearly fell in 1968, when the Minneapolis Orchestra reinvented itself as the Minnesota Orchestra. The idea was to emphasise the broader commitment of this "orchestra on wheels". But in focusing on state over city, many followers

‘The management wanted to find someone hungry for music’

felt that the orchestra was, paradoxically, contracting rather than expanding its identity. That identity had, after all, been built from the days when Rachmaninov played his Second Piano Concerto with it when Eugene Ormandy chose it to make the first ever complete electric recording of a Mahler symphony, when Dmitri Mitropoulos signed and sealed its glory days.

Four years ago, there was a strike — a not uncommon feature of American orchestral life. The message (apart from more money, more recordings) seemed to be the urgent desire for a warmer, younger music director after the various misadventures of Sir Neville Marriner and Edo de Waart, and an itch to be known and loved in Europe. Time for more reinvention. The dapper,

40-year-old Hiroshima-born Eiji Oue, now in his third season as music director at Minnesota, seemed to many onlookers a baffling appointment — especially when Leonard Slatkin and Christoph Eschenbach were then hovering in the wings. But the management wanted to create its own success story, to find someone, in the words of orchestra president David Hyslop, "hungry for music". The European tour will be Oue's baptism by fire. A sweet-talking guy, as fluent conversationally as he is with the baton, Oue has certainly, through his initiation of a plethora of education programmes, become the darling of the Twin Cities community at large as well as of its wealthy benefactors. "The Land of 10,000 Lakes has been renamed the Land of 10,000 Ouations", an audience member whispered to me as the entire Orchestra Hall in downtown Minneapolis rose to applaud Oue's Beethoven. But the honeymoon period is drawing to a close, and Oue must be on his mettle.

Oue has recently, and shrewdly, appointed one of Minnesota's favourite adopted sons, the Pulitzer Prize-winning Dominick Argento, as the orchestra's Composer Laureate. The band brings with it to the Barbican his new piece, *Reverie: Reflections on a Hymn Tune*. "They wanted a ten-minute orchestra piece which ended with a bang," says Argento wryly (his works, mainly operas and highly inventive song-cycles, are known for their pianissimo endings). So he chose an Easter hymn on which to "kinda ruminate. You never actually hear the tune. But just when you're pretty sure the piece is over, a humming starts two rows back in the orchestra..." Argento hopes to come to London for the long-awaited British premiere of his 1988 opera *The Aspern Papers* at the Guildhall School in June.

And as the Minnesota Orchestra hits the ultimate pioneer trail, through France, Germany, Slovenia and Austria, 7,000 schools back home will be invited to log on and take off on a Virtual Tour devised by the band's indefatigable director of public affairs, Karl Reichert. This Angliophile was inspired by Britain's breakfast TV weather forecast to create a huge walk-on map of Europe for the floor of Minneapolis's central mall, to enable shoppers, too, to follow the tour for themselves. Now there's invention for you.

● Inventing America: A Year of American Culture is at the Barbican from this weekend until Thanksgiving Day on Nov 26 (0171-638 8891). The Minnesota Orchestra starts its European tour at the Barbican on Feb 18, then visits Nottingham, Birmingham, Leeds and Reading, Feb 19-22.



A Minneapolis wave: Eiji Oue, now in his third season as music director of the Minnesota Orchestra, leads the band on its first ever European tour

## Second to none

CONCERT

London Sinfonietta  
Queen Elizabeth Hall

MANY years have passed since the critic Andrew Porter described Elliott Carter as the "greatest living composer", and the label is now truer than ever. Reinvented, he is experiencing a remarkable Indian summer, and several new and important scores will be played during the celebrations leading up to his 90th birthday later this year.

The first of the year's Carter concerts, given by the London Sinfonietta under Oliver Knussen, was constructed around a clutch of anniversaries. Not only did it form part of the Sinfonietta's own 30th birthday programme, but it featured music written for Carter's 70th and 80th birthdays. We heard Lutoslawski's *Slides*, an eloquent series of suddenly changing pictures, and Knussen's own *Coursing*, a work of raging energy based on a single motif. Both were more impressive than Milton Babbitt's *The Crowded Air*, but all received quicksilver performances.

All were put into perspective, too, by

is played by someone of Collins's musicianship.

This concerto is as impeccable as anything that Carter has written. Here his chamber orchestra is used sparsely and he makes much of spatial effects in his grouping of the players. In different sections the soloist is particularly associated with different groups, and moves around the platform in a sort of secular stations of the cross. Most of the episodes are vigorous, but the lyrical moments include one where the soft brass create an unforgettable warm glow.

Looking back, the programme also spotlighted Carter's seminal Double Concerto (1961), a symmetrical score centred on a despairing Adagio. In this interpretation, with the harpichordist John Corbiste and pianist Ian Brown, everything fell perfectly into place, making the performance a tribute to both Carter and the Sinfonietta.

JOHN ALLISON

## Screaming blasts from the past

The third of eight package shows at the Astoria organised by the NME in the run-up to its awards show (popularly known as the Brits) next Tuesday was a surprisingly quaint affair. As usual, the event was promoted as an opportunity to catch some of the best new names in pop currently being endorsed by the grooviest weekly music paper in the world. But there was an unrepentantly old-fashioned feel to all three of the bands that managed to show up, one of whom, Therapy?, enjoyed a peak of success in the pre-Britpop 1990s.

Edinburgh hopefuls, Idlewild, who opened proceedings, were certainly young and, one would hope, at the beginning of a steep learning

curve. After 'banging out' a succession of gauche, two-minute wonders and striking every punk pose in the book, they slunk off to mildly sympathetic applause.

With the exception of Bush, Therapy? from Belfast remain the nearest thing to a grunge band that the UK has produced. Now expanded to a quartet, with new members Graham Hopkins (drums) and Martin McCarrick (cello and guitar) flanking a clear-shaven Andy Cairns, they played with a tremendous combination of power, pace and precision. New songs such as *Lonely Cryin'* only suggested that they may now be heading in a melodic-punk direction à la Green Day while heavier favourites, including

*Teethgrinder* and *Knives*, were dispatched with cool authority if rather less aggression than used to be the case in the group's heyday.

No explanation was offered for the non-appearance of Dust Junkies (whose frontman, Nicky Lockett, had chicken pox), but Defonese evidently took it as a signal to stretch out their bit of the show for as long as they felt inclined. An aptly named quartet of late developers from Sacramento, who have been playing together for nine years, Defonese are

a living tribute to heavy metal's continuing ability to mutate and survive. As bands like Metallica and Anthrax either blend into the mainstream or fade away, so a more virulent strain of headbanging group emerges.

Playing at colossal volume, Defonese began with an impressive display of crude force and manic energy, but gradually descended into a grisly mire of self-indulgence as singer Chino Moreno made a succession of increasingly lengthy forays into the crowd. Ugly, brutish and tediously unrestrained, they landed their punches like Mike Tyson but without the bite. Whatever did happen to Frong?

DAVID SINCLAIR

## NEW CLASSICAL CDs: Minstrel music; flamboyant tenor; fine conducting

Hilary Finch

■ **LE JARDIN DE MELODIES** 16th-century dances and songs  
The King's Noys  
Harmonia Mundit 907194  
\*\*\* £15.45  
A FINE tapestry belonging to Catherine de Medici adorns the slipcase of the latest disc from the American Renaissance violin consort, The King's Noys. And inside is

some of the music she might have heard at a noble luncheon concert: the dances and chansons of anonymous minstrels, here in editions prepared by the group's founder, David Douglas, and deftly turned and pointed by these troubadours of the New World.

The nicely astringent soprano of Ellen Hargis heralds Henry IV's royal procession with *Mon Dieu la belle Enée*, and then comes a succession of stately Pavanes, leaping Saltarellos, and Furlanos from Friuli. The violin band is tinted here and there by the sound of bagpipes and a varied palette of percussion (Tom Zajak) and by the sweet lute playing of Paul O'Dette. He contributes a frisky *Bransle Gay* as the perfect foil to Douglas's arrangements (diminutions, he calls them) of the plangent *Susanne un jour* in its versions by Cipriano de Rore and Orlando de Lassus.

John Higgins

■ **BRUCE FORD** Great Operatic Arias  
Chandos CHAN 3006  
\*\*\* £14.99  
BRUCE FORD has swiftly established himself as a highly accomplished Rossinian. His tenor has the fluidity to cope with the composer's most ex-

travagant demands and its well-weighted masculinity means that he never has to resort to the goat-like bleatings produced by some of his colleagues in this repertoire.

There are only two Rossini items in his recital with the Philharmonia, kept under tight control by David Parry. In *Armida* he takes on the role of the second tenor Ubaldino, with the help of Barry Banks, who shudders before the sorceress's magic garden. The Barber provides Almaviva's *Cessa al più*, practically always cut in performance because it is fiendishly difficult, and the opera has gone on quite long enough by the time the aria arrives. Both are show pieces sung with proper flamboyance.

Most of the other items are gentler fare: a serenade (*The Fair Maid of Perth*), an arabesque (*Le Roi d'Ys*), a romance (*Elisir*)... All are numbers once associated with Heddie Nash, and Ford's gracious style has much in common with that tenor, not least in his readiness to sing everything in English. A bit perverse now, days and, oddly, the one aria which did not need translation. *Where'er you walk*, is the least successful.

CDs reviewed in *The Times* can be ordered from the Times Music Shop on 0845 023496.

ORCHESTRAL  
Barry Millington

■ **ELGAR** *Enigma Variations* / *In the South* / *Coronation March*  
Bournemouth SO/Hurst  
Naxos 8.5533564 \*\*\* £4.99

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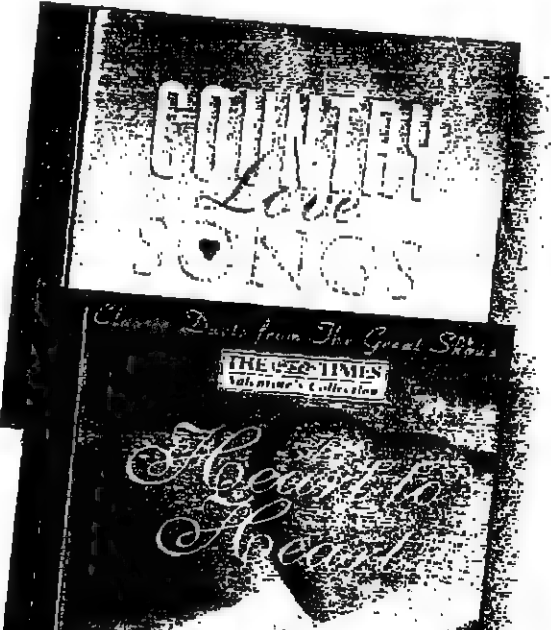
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Once upon a time: Peter Ackroyd looks back to the days when literary theorists stood on giants' shoulders and headed for a fall

# A very good place to start

Professor Kermode once wrote *The Sense of an Ending* and now, for the first time published in England, Professor Said counters with *Beginnings*. The poor lay author is often more concerned with the middle, however, which can prove more intractable. *Beginnings* are wilful, and endings are resigned: the novelist or historian learns that individual will or imagination cannot triumph over the ineluctable laws of narrative and language.

And that, in one sense, is Said's theme. He is concerned with the nature of narrative itself, and in particular with the strange history of the novel: it began in the 18th century with a sense of procreative life but, by the 20th, had acquired constrictions and ambiguities which left it gasping for breath.

Said suggests that "the novelistic form was displaced by a later form in which discontinuity, dispersion and rarefaction are the essentials": there has been a great transition from the classical principles of truthfulness and continual progress to modern notions of indeterminacy and plurality. The text is no longer authoritative, but vulnerable.

It ought to be clear, even from this somewhat generalised summary, that *Beginnings* was written some years ago. Said started work upon it in 1967, and the book was published in America eight years later. That is why the terms seem, perhaps, over-familiar.

Yet the book is more than a simple exercise in literary theory. Said is right, for example, to emphasise the "aboriginal human need to point to or locate a beginning". It can be found in the very first story of that great egg from which life spilled out after being hit by a hammer: this was the earliest of the "big bang" theories

which have exercised the imaginations of magicians and scientists alike.

The whole question of origins is in any case complicated by contemporary theories which no longer require that the past should be anterior to the future; in the field of scientific experiment no such presumption can be made. It is in fact widely assumed that a future situation can affect the events that precede it, which is very close to the mystical belief that past, future and present exist eternally together. It is all very puzzling for the

**BEGINNINGS**  
Intention and Method  
By Edward Said  
Granta, £12.99  
ISBN 1 85207 160 8

philosopher, but of immense interest to poets and novelists.

It is in fact the merit of *Beginnings* that it prompts such speculation. The book itself might be considered part of the Franco-American school of literary criticism, which was conducted at a very high level of generality and with a great deal of self-conscious word-play. There are times when this is appropriate and pleasing — Said's close reading of Gerard Manley Hopkins provides quite the best account of that poet's activity but there are also occasions when it seems that a fistful of abstractions have been thrown into the air only to land where they may.

It is a young man's book, filled with the passionate versatility of a highly intelligent and gifted scholar who is attempting to create patterns of significance out of his multifarious reading. It resists criticism, since the impulse which brought it

into the world was so private and so pure. But since Said has agreed to its republication it cannot remain immune from the critical insight which he himself applies so successfully.

It is dated in the sense that it belongs to a very definite phase in the theory of criticism: the Sixties and early Seventies represented a period of astonishing fertility and inventiveness in the work of Foucault, Derrida and others. The main impetus came from France, but the theorists of that country were soon joined by eager academics from America and elsewhere. They attempted works of criticism which might accommodate no less than everything with language itself considered to be the true fabric of humankind, the student of language became the late 20th-century equivalent of the medieval scholastic who believed that by steady concentration one might reach towards the mind of God.

There was one important corollary. The more fashionable and intelligent critics then came to believe that they were also artists, and that in some way their texts would be able to replace — or at least be equivalent to — the writing of the novelists and poets whom they professed to study. Two heroes of the literary establishment, Pound and Joyce, had contrived a literary language in which everything could be dissolved in non-critical theorists' manufactured their own language which might perform the same task.

The academic was no longer the one who taught because he could not "do it": the academic became the creative genius. That is what Said implies, suggesting that "the classical novel goes on today in the form of the critic's enterprise". He prefaces this remark by conceding "it is probably too much to say



In the beginning: Salvador Dalí's *Geopolitical Child watching the Birth of the New Man* (from Dalí's Selected Works, Academy Editions)

that" but it has been said, and the intention is clear enough.

It could not last. The critical texts of any period are always the least remembered. It is of course too late to return to the old canon that one kind of writing is superior to another — that the poem is superior to the novel, the novel to biography,

and so forth. A great biographer is more dramatic than a mediocre playwright, and an interesting novelist is more accurate than a poor historian.

That is no longer the point. One of the most important conclusions of recent critical activity lies in the sure knowledge that all writing is

one. Instead one can only apply a pragmatic test. Good criticism is not as good as good fiction or good history. That is all there is to be said.

It is perhaps best to return to what Said calls "the beginning enterprise" and the origin of this review. *Beginnings* is a clever and

intriguing work which can still be read with interest, if not always with pleasure: the aim of all discourse is to create a new order out of that which has already been written, and *Beginnings* fulfils that task. It should be on the shelf of anyone still intrigued by 20th century literary theory.

## It was birth that made them noble

Ian McIntyre on wig and peer

A severe critic of our institutions said that the cure for admiring the House of Lords was to go and look at it. John Wells, in what sadly turns out to have been his last book, took Bagheer's advice, and explored what he calls "the mystery of state theatre". His credentials were impeccable. He had taught at Eton and was a founding editor of *Private Eye*. Wells the Beak and Wells the Eye seem to have carved the task up most satisfactorily between them.

His publishers call the result an anecdotal history, but Wells contradicts them. "I am not a historian. This is not a serious work of history, more an extended journalistic essay." More precisely it is two, because his review of how their Lordships' house developed over the centuries is spiced with an entertaining account of how the show is kept on the road today.

Did a peer actually die during a debate in the chamber in the Sixties? Had *rigor mortis* set in before anyone noticed? Did the doorknobs bundle him into a taxi to permit the fiction that he had died on the way to hospital

**THE HOUSE OF LORDS**  
An Anecdotal History  
By John Wells  
Hodder & Stoughton, £20  
ISBN 0 340 64223 3

rather than in the Royal Palace of Westminster? Was Lord Milford, the only communist ever to take his seat there, disinherited by his father as a young man for painting a nude with green public hair? Did the Earl of Arran, asked why a debate on badgers had been less well attended than a debate on buggers, say he thought it must be because there were fewer badgers in the Lords?

Wells does not disclose whether he consulted Ben Trovati in the course of his researches, but he certainly interviewed Garter King-of-Arms ("Some Rastafarian wants to use the Lion of Judah. That really won't do. That is somebody's family crest"). He pored over books about English constitutional theory and was permitted (though without the knowledge of the Lord Great Chamberlain — he



Wells casting an eye on the upper chamber

could have been in trouble there) to inspect Queen Victoria's private lavatory. He learnt that bald Lord Chancellors are offered silk linings for their wigs to stop the horsehair irritating their scalps. And as he gazed down on Baroness Thatcher on the day of her introduction, it seemed to him that her hair was soft and golden "like the fur on a teddy bear's bottom". Clearly he was a romantic.

The informing theme of his book is the conflict between the hierarchical and the egalitarian vision of society — the image of the Shining Ladder and the opposing dream of the Bright Horizon. That makes it a tract for the times which could be read with profit both by Blair's New Model Army and the huddle of management consultants concealing the leader of the Conservative rump from the public view and gaze.

as a sort of historical theme park ("a cross a between Hammer House of Horror and Liberty" suggests Wells), but he notes that although from 1649 England managed for 11 years without the monarchy, it survived for only eight without a House of Lords. "We are useful rather than important," the Lord Chairman of Committees under the last government said modestly. "Our job is tidying up the messes they make at the other end of the building." Wells himself found a crisper formulation for the Lord's traditional role of giving time for mature consideration. "If the Commons is Caesar drunk, the Lords is Caesar sober."

There have been some pretty improbable advocates of reform. Early this century the young Winston Churchill proposed a senate of 250, nominated by each of the parties and matching the composition of the Commons. This, he argued, would exclude "frivolous, lethargic, unstructured or disreputable elements". The Duke of Beaufort, not amused, said he would like to see Churchill and Lloyd George in "the middle of 20 couple of dog hounds".

Wells observes that very little has been written in defence of the hereditary prin-

ciple and then generally under the threat of its abolition. I suspect that if he had gone to press a little later, he might have had more to say about the not-unrelated question of the future of the monarchy.

I could have done with less on Anthony Wedgwood Benn's protracted campaign not to be consigned to what he regarded as "the British Outer Mongolia for retired politicians". I also felt that Wells the Eye should have been reined in over the ramifications and implications of the preposterous Amphil divorce case in the 1920s. Hilarious as his account is, it has a braking effect on his narrative thrust.

His account of the 1995 Lords debate on Maasricht, on the other hand, is full of good things. "Had their lordships noticed," asked Lord Stockton, "that Lord Tebbit only ever appeared in the Chamber after dark? Should someone tell him that Transylvania had not yet applied for membership of the European Community?"

Wells would have snorted at lapidary inscriptions but he might just settle for the confession Charles Lamb once made to Southey: "Anything awful makes me laugh. I mistake heaven once at a funeral."

## Season's end brings a fall from love

Jane Shilling

**THE LAST FINE SUMMER**  
By John McKenna  
Penguin, £15.99  
ISBN 0 330 35213 X



McKenna: off by heart

EVER since the story of the woman who began writing about love — the fear and promise and bright hope of it; the darkening loss of it, and the way that romantic love brusquely shoulders aside all other quieter and more durable bonds — of friendship, affection, honour, respect.

Modern writers on this ancient subject often feel, understandably enough, the need to tweak its tail a little. To give it a Post-Modern spin; inject a dose of knowing irony; drape it in heroin chic; persuade Cupid to add a couple of funky new steps to his old dance. Not John McKenna, though. In his latest novel he writes about love as sweetly and longingly and elegantly as any captive Cavalier penning a last couplet to his sweetheart before stepping out to greet his executioner with a smile.

*The Last Fine Summer* is a story about love, and hope, and what happens when both of these are gone. The summer is that of 1984, when every day dawns hot and blue. It is the last year of school for Tim and Kevin — born in the same month of the same year, at opposite ends of the same lane in rural Ireland; who lost their mothers within a year of each other, and who now share a dream of escape from slowwitted Irish farming life to something fast — college in Dublin adulthood, excitement.

There is, though, a difference. Tim is steady, reflective, a follower; Kevin wild, reckless, passionate. He hates his father with passion and his father responds with vicious beatings. He loves Tim with equal passion, and Tim responds with a love of his own; an affection and intimacy with its roots deep in their shared childhood, made troubling by an urgent adolescent need for sexual exploration. Kevin has, though, a sister Hannah, as bright and beautiful as he, but steeper and not so wild — a less alarming object of desire for Tim who is not, in any case, as Kevin blankly acknowledges, a "proper queer".

As the autumn comes, the new academic year approaches and with it the promise of college, Dublin, new friends, new ideas and a new life. The little triangle of desire and discovery collapses into a catastrophe that was, Hannah believes, half willed by Kevin.

Is there such a thing as a pure, unforced accident? Or are all disasters embraced, if not consciously, by their victims? It is a question that haunts Tim as he recounts the events of 1984 viewed, a decade later, through the glass of another shattered love, another untimely death. By

now he has become a teacher, a figure of authority, you would think it is strange, then, that he still lives in his childhood home. That his second great love is for one of his pupils? One wonders whether Tim is not implicated, by his very passivity in his own tragedies. As narrated his tone is questioning, as though the telling of the first great loss could somehow explain the second. If cannot. No does McKenna, in his elegant account of that often unlovely phenomenon, first love, permit himself the sentimental gesture of comfort — beyond the faint hope of ventral healing to be drawn from the knowledge that even lost love lives on in love's memory, and so is not altogether vanished.

## The chance of a lifetime

Lewis Wolpert

**TWINS**  
Genes, Environment and the Mystery of Identity  
By Lawrence Wright  
Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £14.99  
ISBN 0 307 88763 3



Twin concert: pop group Gemini

It is really true, as Wright suggests, that "twins threaten us because they undermine our notion of identity". Rather than our being who we are because of the life we have lived, it is possible that instead it is the genetic make-up with which we are conceived and then born, that is the true determining factor? It is from studies on twins that the author wants to base such extreme claims.

Identical twins occur at a rate of about three per thousand births across all cultures. They are a clone and have identical genetic information, for they arise from the developing embryo after fertilisation has taken place — and so differ from fraternal twins which are just two embryos developing from different fertilised eggs at the same time and place. It was Darwin's cousin, Francis Galton, who in the 1870s initiated the studies on twins, for he realised that they "afforded a means of distinguishing between the effects of nature and nurture".

Since Galton's time twins have been studied with varying degrees of reliability and, alas, integrity. There is the unpublished study of Dr Neubauer from a psychoanalytic institute in New York, who arranged for twins to be separated at birth and that neither the adopting parents nor the children were to be told they were twins. The Nazi doctor Mengele did unspeakable things to twins in concentration camps. That, however, is all in the past and there are now major twin registries like that at the University of Minnesota, which keeps track of more than 8,000 twin pairs.

Twins can provide a means for measuring how much of the variability of a

from some developmental psychologists, as distinct from the behavioral geneticists.

That there is a strong correlation between the intelligence of identical twins is without doubt. Surprisingly, the similarities increase with age. If one identical male twin is gay then the probability that the other twin will also be gay is about one half, compared to the one fifth chance among fraternal twins. There is a similar relation with respect to getting divorced. And the chances of getting depressed seems to be little influenced by the early family environment. But there is nothing on how much money they earn.

There are numerous stories of astonishing similarities — like male twins marrying, divorcing, and remarriage women with the same name, or making miniature furniture or storing rubber bands on their wrists. There is also the so-called vanishing twin syndrome — it is thought that if one twin dies during pregnancy the survivor may feel guilt when they find out.

The book is poorly structured but there is also much interesting information on birth defects and handedness in twins. But if genetics is so important, why, for example, does one identical twin suffer from schizophrenia while the other one has the condition in only about 50 percent of cases? The answer, which Wright does not recognise, is that development of the embryo, while controlled by the genes, is reliable but not perfectly so. The billions of nerve cells and their connections in the brains of identical twins will be similar, but not identical. It is this variability that makes identical twins different. We should not feel threatened by our genetic endowment but explore the possibilities of bringing out its potential.

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## Hard act to follow

FEW regimes can have lent themselves quite so readily to satire as the risibly misnamed German Democratic Republic. Few satires, at any rate, have set about their subject with more gleefully savage abandon than this novel by a writer whose childhood and adolescence were spent under that regime, and whose maturity — he was born in East Berlin in 1965 — more or less coincided with its dramatic end.

Vividly translated by John Brownlow, *Heroes Like Us* has as its protagonist an anti-hero of crass, but captivating oddness. Klaus Uhltzsch, cursed with an unpronounceable name and a small, uncooperative penis, is the man who brought down the Berlin Wall. So, at least, he tells Mr Kitzelstein, an interviewer from *The New York Times* who has come, it seems, to record the details of his curious life. In which both name and penis have significant roles to play.

Encouraged by his appearance on the cover of East Germany's bestselling weekly news magazine at the age of nine, Uhltzsch nurtures fantasies of fame and distinction. Those fantasies offer some respite from a childhood that

Ian Brunskill

**HEROES LIKE US**  
By Thomas Brussig  
Harvill, £9.99  
ISBN 1 85146 403 3

is dreary, restricted and, above all, very hygienic.

Fame, distinction and service to mankind both down in the end to a job in the Accounts Department of the Press and Postal Subscriptions Service, an unglamorous outpost of the Stasi secret police whose function, while clearly remote from press or postal subscriptions of any kind, remains essentially obscure even to its dedicated staff. The unlovely mysteries of sex, meanwhile, turn out to involve onanism, in hazardous spots, a dose of clasp, an attempted rape, and an unhealthy interest in over-ready brother hens.

Plucked one day from perverted obscurity, Uhltzsch secures his longed-for place in history when his participation in a bizarre medical experiment not only enables him to save the life of East Germany's head of state, but subsequently transforms his penis to the point where it threatens to assume the dimensions of a dead seal. This — don't ask how — is what prompts him to take the momentous step his companions dared not take without him, finally forcing open the Berlin Wall.

Klaus Uhltzsch deplores the passivity of his countrymen, both before German unification and since. But his real venom is reserved for those distinguished East German writers and intellectuals whose dissidence rarely went beyond semantics and whose pedantic passivity he sees merely as helping to bolster the regime. Funny, deplorable, silly and vicious by turns, Thomas Brussig's second novel is, without doubt, a book those older writers could never have written.

# Just chips off the old block

Is modern life rubbish? Sadie Plant encounters artificial intelligence

**H**umans are no longer alone with their thoughts. A wave of recent developments in computing, microbiology, electronics, telecommunications and a vast range of interconnected fields has extended the possibility of intelligent activity to thinking machines, self-organising networks, self-replicating forms of non-organic life. John Casti's work on complexity theory leaves him well-equipped to deal with these developments, and as a non-fiction writer he has already made many aspects of contemporary mathematics accessible to a wide audience. In *The Cambridge Quintet*, he moves into a zone somewhere between fiction and history — his subtitle calls it scientific speculation — to discuss the implications of machine intelligence.

The scene is fictional, but entirely plausible. Casti imagines that in 1949, representatives of the British government ask C. P. Snow to co-ordinate a meeting on the possibility and implications of intelligent machines. Snow brings together a high-powered group: the geneticist J. B. S. Haldane, the physicist Erwin Schrödinger, the mathematician Alan Turing and the philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein.

Organised around a menu — in the literal, rather than the hi-tech sense — the book's characters convene over a sumptuous meal. Turing, whose wartime work with encryption devices has been crucial to both the course of the war and the development of the computer, holds the fort during both the soup and fish. In a sense, the meal is an occasion for him to present his work to the others, injecting it to their scrutiny and introducing computing to biology, physics and philosophy. Over the meat, the discussion broadens out as

**THE CAMBRIDGE QUINTET**  
A Work of Scientific Speculation

By John L. Casti

Little Brown, £16.99

ISBN 0 316 04281 9

**COMPUTER ONE**

By Warwick Collins

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ISBN 0 7145 3033 6

**DARWIN AMONG THE MACHINES**

By George Dyson

Allen Lane, £20

ISBN 0 171 91225 0

Wittgenstein begins to raise objections to Turing's conception of a thinking machine. The salad finds them talking about language over dessert they move to questions of individual identity: with brandy and cigars, they range through the broader issues of culture and society.

There are no conclusions by the end of the meal, but the conversation is always interesting, sometimes lively and entertaining too. Turing uses the bowls and spoons to demonstrate the basic operations of his computing machine, and makes Haldane's piece of sole into a point about mathematical coding. But there are also points at which the conversation falls somewhere between a Socratic dialogue and a stilled re-writing of the characters' published ideas. The book is relatively short, and with the exception of the food, the dinner, Simmons (a shadowy character, who butles in and



Alan Turing: computing with nature

out of the action with what Casti describes as "the socialism typical of the British serving class" and a few references to postwar Britain, Casti has little time for the setting of scenes, the painting of portraits, or any writing beyond that strictly necessary to the discussion. Nevertheless, when the party breaks up, and Schrödinger compliments his colleagues on the stimulating nature of their discussion, his senti-

ments will probably be shared by many readers too. Casti has organised a satisfying meal.

Rather than the fictional beginnings of machine intelligence, Warwick Collins looks forward to a fictional end in his novel *Computer One*. This book, which received a great deal of critical praise when it was first published five years ago, presents a nightmare scenario in which Turing's machines have moved from soup bowls and spoons to the point at which their self-organising capacities threaten the existence of the human race. The immense convergence of computer networks already visible in the rise of the Net begins to constitute the emergence of an alien species of intelligent non-organic life, technologies thought to be simple tools coalesce into an enemy.

Collins thinks the human species is sleepwalking towards this disaster. Casti, in the post-script to his fiction, sees machine intelligence emerging as something very different, but by no means antagonistic to the human world. Machines, he suggests, will be like dolphins, playing out in their own oceans without interference in human affairs. If this vision is too reassuring, the picture Collins paints may well be far too bleak: while the emergence of a global non-organic intelligence will hardly leave the human species untouched, its impact will also be far more convoluted and complex than the simple threat of destruction.

It falls to a builder of kayaks, George Dyson, to consider the broader implications of machine intelligence. Dyson has some interesting family connections — his sister, Esther, is a leading figure in contemporary

computer culture — but the fresh and inquiring spirit of *Darwin Among the Machines* may be due to the fact that he is neither a mathematician nor a storyteller by trade, and was certainly no expert on this theme when he began.

If *The Cambridge Quintet* interrogates a quasi-fictional past which *Computer One* projects into the future, *Darwin Among the Machines* is more akin to a history of the present. Dyson moves through the history of philosophy, computing and evolutionary biology, tracing the notion of some global intelligence through the work of writers including Samuel Butler, Thomas Hobbes, Charles Darwin and a host of the mathematicians crucial to the history of intelligent machines — Leibniz, Gödel, von Neumann and, of course, Alan Turing.

A noticeable absence at Casti's party was the figure of Norbert Wiener, whose *Cybernetics, Communication and Control in Animal and Machine* was published just before the fictional meal took place. Wiener's influence on Dyson's history is also minimal, even though many of the technical and intellectual developments he traces in his book owe much to Wiener's work on systems, feedback, and the continuities of organic and non-organic life. But, like Casti and Collins, Dyson is telling a story with no pretensions to completion. And if it is not all-encompassing, this is a lucid and thoughtful book, all the more welcome for its willingness to think beyond the anthropomorphism implicit in so many other discussions of life, learning and evolution.

Sadie Plant's *Zeros and Ones: Digital Women and the New Technoculture* is published by Fourth Estate, priced £14.99.

## Who says other names don't smell as sweet?

Compton Miller

**WHO'S WHO**  
ABC Black, £105  
ISBN 0 130 4742 7

**I**f the Queen inexplicably forgot your name in the New Year's Honours List then, the next best accolade was to be among the 1,300 new entrants in the latest *Who's Who*. Its editors very rarely tinker with the 30,000-odd entries, allowing you to be as boastful, verbose and economical with the truth as you like. Once selected you are in for life, no matter that you go bankrupt, kill a parking warden or disappear 23 years ago like Lord Lucan. But, if this 150-year-old "mob" bible is to justify its reputation as Britain's most "accurate, detailed, up-to-date" reference book, its pusillanimous editors (anonymous) need to sharpen their pruning shears and acquire some grafting skills. How can Baroness Thatcher have only 15 lines while Dame Barbara Cartland has 221?

As the author of a similar, more focused, directory of Britain's current movers and shakers, *Who's Really Who*, I consider it important that every entry should at least contain basic details like birth dates, marriages and children. The editors have a duty to ferret out this information even if it means scouring newspaper libraries and the Office for National Statistics in Islington.

Among our overlapping entries I was surprised to find actress Susan Hampshire give

her birthday as May 12, 1942 where her birth certificate states that she was born in 1937. Both comic Ken Dodd and Harold's chairman Mohamed al-Fayed lop four years off their respective 1927 and 1929 birth years. Disc jockey Jimmy Young includes his birthday but not the year, while former newspaper editor Eve Pollard and writer Anita Brookner leave these details blank (they were born December 25, 1946 and July 16, 1928 respectively).

Lord Irvine of Lairg, the Lord Chancellor omits his first marriage. To Ayr, butcher's daughter Margaret Veitch, as does George Carman, QC, to brewer's daughter Ursula Groves. There is also no mention of Sir Terence Comran's first two wives. Labour MP Patricia Hewitt "forgets" her first marriage to Tory grandee Lord Gibson-Watt's son David, as does Shadow Minister Sir Norman Fowler to journalist Linda Christmas and Sir David Frost to actress Lynne Frederick. Even that stickler for truth Lord Hailsham only recalls his second and third mar-

riages, perhaps because his first wife Natalie ran off during the war with a Free French officer.

Racehorse-owner Robert Sangster ignores all three of his marriages, which must be confusing for his six children. Clive James avoids mentioning his wife Prue and their two

children. Mysteriously, actress Jane Asher and cartoonist Gerald Scarfe include their three children but not their marriage year.

Family considerations clearly influence some entries. Former Channel 4 chief executive Michael Grade leaves out his mother (but not his grand-

mother!), and Baroness Thatcher "forgets" her mother Beatrice. John Cleese and Janet Street-Porter ignore their original family names (Cheese and Bull respectively). Novelist Jeanette Winterson includes her "partner" Dr M. Reynolds but not his Christian name, Margaret.

Among 1998's new entries are actresses Brenda Blethyn and Imelda Staunton, royal press secretary Geoff Crawford, Rodean headmistress Patricia Metham, television personality Lloyd Grossman and Booker prizewinner Michael Ondaatje. But there is still no recognition for pop singers

Mick Jagger and George Michael, television personality Selina Scott, financier "Tiny" Rowland, novelist Len Deighton and comedienne Dawn French.

Compton Miller is the author of *Who's Really Who* (Harden's Books, £6.99).



## A country reclaims its right to exist

Lesley Chamberlain

**BORDERLAND**  
A Journey Through the History of the Ukraine

By Anna Reid

Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £18.99

ISBN 0 297 81818 X



Russian poster of 1952 depicting Ukraine's grain wealth

**I**n the Soviet aftermath Ukraine came to international attention as an uncertain small nation with nuclear weapons, suddenly in possession of such symbolic Russian properties as the Black Sea Fleet and the Crimea. The West watched anxiously until an agreement was reached in 1994 to hand over the arsenal, and Russia accepted Ukraine's claim to the densely Russian Crimea.

Neither side has yet secured the fleet, but Ukraine has meanwhile won the international attention it wanted. A country larger than France and as populous as Britain, it was grossly shortchanged in the Versailles Settlement after the First World War. Swallowed up in the Soviet Union, it suffered enforced collectivisation, the Purges and lost one in five of its population in the Second World War. It naturally resents any assumption that it isn't really there or shouldn't make itself known.

True, for much of its 1,000-year history, Ukraine has lived off self-interpretation. While the Russians held power in the East, in the West the Poles and Austrians imposed different centres of national reference on a fragmented no-man's land. For the stolid Ruthenians or Little Russians, trying to hold on to Ukraine has been a miserable struggle. But as Anna Reid observes in this gripping history, the new millennium at last offers Ukraine a chance, after 700 years of provincialism, to become a flourishing democratic state and international player.

Reid, with degrees in law, Russian history and reform economics, writes with authority, having lived for three years in Kiev as a reporter. From the evidence of her trips into what must still be Europe's most decrepit, culturally emaciated corners she must be brave. She is also remarkably clear-headed about the many competing versions of

Ukraine's history, and its mostly invented heroes. A wise and generous government in Kiev would give her a medal.

She writes the kind of history that has recently been called "social memory", respecting the different ways individuals, and individual groups, see the past. Her interviews show unmodern mind-sets, to say the least. Ukraine's historic anti-Semitism is less rampant now with hardly a Jew remaining, but on the evidence of a new guide book it seems to have emigrated with the north American diaspora: they still can't acknowledge the notorious wartime massacre at Babi Yar. Russians, encouraged by the minimal difference between the languages, privately still find the assertion of Ukraine's existence absurd.

This book reminds us of what human beings can inflict on each other: the Romanians who burnt 14,000 Jews alive in Odessa and the deadly female guards in Ravensbrück concentration camp, to where Ukrainian women were deported. It highlights the wartime dilemma of people caught between Stalin and Hitler and who went both ways and killed their own.

Ukraine's economy has not yet found post-communist prosperity and although readers of this book will surely wish it success, few will want to travel there yet, except for a spiritual purge.

## Virtue out of Vice

**A** YOUNG leader, a product of the television age, wins a stunning election victory. To one side of him sits a snarling veteran, an infinitely more accomplished old-style politician in an earlier time would have been the natural for the top job and now feels hard done by. On the other side, his lean, widely loathed campaign manager and intimate, the gate-keeper whose job titles belie the true extent of his power.

Throughout the Fifties, Lyndon Johnson, as the Senate Majority Leader, coupled an ideological flexibility with a persuasive technique known as "The Treatment". This involved him moving his 6'3" frame right up close to his victim and pouring out an invigilating mix of sweetness and terror. Hubert Humphrey said it was "like a cowboy making love". Bobby Kennedy, by contrast, was small and upright, more comfortable with a turkey sandwich, a glass of milk and a pile of papers than Johnson's bourbon and telephone.

In his engrossing account of the relationship between the two men, Jeff Shesol recounts how their rivalry and vendettas had far-reaching repercussions for the America of the Sixties. When the 1960 Democratic nomination for the Presidency came begging, Johnson imagined his record in Washington made him his party's natural choice. The Kennedys, meanwhile, were in the country sealing up the nomination and Johnson had to settle for the vice-presidential slot on their ticket.

Kennedy's people were divided between those who felt Johnson was a crude Southern dinosaur and those who felt he would provide a necessary balance to Kennedy's

northeastern liberalism and perceived inexperience. Once inside the White House, Johnson was frozen out. At Bobby's house on Hickory Hill, the Kennedys would gather for barbecues and toss around wooden dolls of the Vice-President. Only the President showed him any respect. Bobby, on the other hand, was more than just Attorney General. He was the second most important voice in the Executive, the Assistant President to Johnson's enfeebled Vice. For Johnson, Bobby came to symbolise his political humbling. For Bobby, Johnson represented the free-wheeling politics he claimed to abhor.

JFK's assassination changed almost everything. Johnson was big and accommodating to the Kennedys, but Bobby never missed a chance to make Johnson feel unworthy of his inheritance.

Not even his landslide victory in 1964 nor his programme of domestic legislation could make Johnson feel more secure. From 1966, when Kennedy began to oppose Johnson with a more dovish stance on Vietnam, it was open warfare until Kennedy's brief run against Johnson in 1968 for the Democratic presidential nomination was ended by his death. Shesol tells a terrific story extremely well, bringing to life the minute legislative and political battles as well as many juicier moments. He calls his story a Greek tragedy, one of grand ambition thwarted by equally grand flaws. This tragedy, however, was played out against a backdrop of Cold War conflict, Vietnam, civil rights legislation and the creation of the Great Society. It does not need to be called "Greek". An American tragedy will do.

**Philip Davies Broughton**

**MUTUAL CONTEMPT**  
Lyndon Johnson, Robert Kennedy, and the feud that defined a decade

By Jeff Shesol

Norton, £25.50

ISBN 0 393 04878 X























# Bulls, bullets and other tribal imperatives

Should you ever receive an invitation from the Karamoja — a tribe of cattle-herders and cattle-raiders in Uganda — to join them for one of their campfire sing-songs, don't go expecting a jolly Gang Show.

"Oh my bull," begins one of their livelier dirges. "I shot two enemies with one bullet, so I slit your ears."

Did I explain that it is the custom for a Karamojong warrior to slit the ears of his enemy's head each time he kills an enemy tribesman with his newly acquired AK47 rifle? Something in their eyes tells you the bulls aren't too thrilled by this tradition. Nor, of course, is the enemy tribesman.

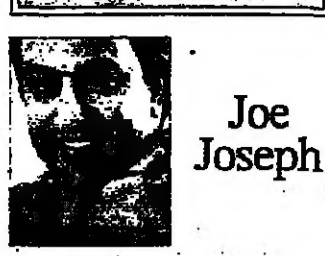
"I found a young girl and I killed her, too," the song continues, gloomily suggested chorus: "I killed her, too. Woo-woo." "Oh, my bull, I shot two enemies with one bullet, so I slit your ears: I found an old man and I killed him, too." ("I killed him, too. Woo-woo.")

We must all await with trepidation the day that Uganda is finally invited to enter the ever-expanding Eurovision Song Contest.

But then again, the Karamojong have plenty to get gloomy about. *Guns For Sale*, last night's film for BBC2's *Under The Sun* series, looked at how the arrival of the gun — displacing sticks and spears — has changed the complexion of life on the already lawless plains of Karamoja. It was the sort of well-made documentary about life in Africa that you don't see much on telly. Particularly intriguing was seeing how the women, though they did no killing themselves, often set the pace for the area's swelling death toll.

Take Lokwarionga, a cattle-raider whose name means, "the warrior with the white bull who has killed many enemies and keeps advancing" (apparently in Karamojong dialect, Monkhouse means "the comedian with the

## REVIEW



Joe Joseph

scars." Karamoja doesn't seem all that different from Carshalton. Lokwarionga obviously has plenty of scars, and good ones, too: he has four wives. "Lokwarionga is lucky," one of this quartet tells us. "Even when ten men are chasing one girl he always gets her. The one thing we object to in him is his obsession with peace meetings. We preferred him when he used to raid. Without guns in

Karamoja people would die and we would be like dogs once again. We thank the gun for what we have. You see, a man without a gun is no man at all." Remember those words the next time somebody says there would be no more wars if women ran the world.

But even Lokwarionga might acknowledge that there are certain drawbacks to the path of peace. On one occasion Lokwarionga has to tell one of his fellow-warriors that he must sacrifice his bull to avert the risk of an enemy raid on the tribe's cattle: which is his order. After reading the sacrificial bull's entrails, the witchdoctor scratches his chin and further pronounces that it will bring good luck to all warriors if they are smeared head-to-toe, gun included, with the semi-digested contents of the bull's stomach. Whoa! Now if you're an optimist you might look on this substance as something that was, until quite recently, fresh grass. A

peasant, though, might feel unable to completely forget the fact that this sludge was just a colon away from being a compot. Unluckily for those Karamojong warriors lurking at the end of the queue, there is plenty enough sludge for everyone. Deceptively capacious, bull's stomachs.

Maybe Lokwarionga now knows what it feels like to be Chief Constable Charles Pollard of the Thames Valley Police, who let a BBC2 crew follow his officers for six months to film *The Force*.

In last night's programme, the first of four, we watched how the hobbies of Thames Valley maintained public order when tackling hostile armies of animal rights activists and anti-car protesters. Not always successfully, was the answer. But then again, they haven't yet smeared themselves with the contents of a bull's

stomach. It's the surest way they'll ever find of keeping crowds at bay.

Talia, whom we met on Esther Rantzen's new BBC1 series *Prostate*, is the sort of girl who doesn't look at the size of a man's scars before jumping into bed with him, but the size of his wallet. But where precisely was the "fascinating insight into the world's oldest profession" we were promised? Just because Talia is smart and fluent in four languages doesn't mean that this wasn't just another peep at a prostitute whose feelings of being isolated and unloved as a child were tragically compounded by being abused by somebody close to her family: one more demimonde documentary beckoning us from a dark corner of the late-night schedules, with its skirt hitched provocatively up one thigh. The one occasion when it might actually have been intriguing to adopt a fly-on-the-wall approach, the BBC fails us.

BBC1
6.00am Business Breakfast (58261)
7.00am Breakfast News (T) (38445)
9.00am All Over the Shop (5481464)
9.05am Real Rooms A Rochdale bedroom (5370771)
1.30 Kilroy (T) (5412209)
10.30 Can't Cook, Won't Cook (T) (5893071)
10.35 The Really Useful Show (T) (7676229)
11.35 What Would You Do? (4918532)
12.00am News (T) (7548938)
12.05pm Call My Bluff (1200209)
12.35pm Going for a Song (7424483)
1.00pm O'Clock News (T) and weather (51532)
1.30 Regional News (T) (51564483)
1.40 The Weather Show (5643483)
1.45 Neighbours (T) (39705377)
2.10 Patience (T) (5139300)
2.55 Wogan's Best of Blatantly Blank (T) (3843251)
3.30 Playdays (5465990) 3.50 The Littlest Pet Shop (5819735) 4.00 McGee and Me (5853558) 4.20 Julia Jewell and Hermit (5855025) 4.35 The Mask (147272)
5.00 Newsround (T) (5881759)
5.10 The Domes Headmaster Last in series (T) (5123559)
5.25 Neighbours (T) (T) (547596)
5.50 Six O'Clock News (T) and weather (581)
6.30 Regional News (503)
7.00 Watchdog with Anne Robinson (T) (5153)
7.30 EastEnders Sanjay is taken in for questioning about the hunt for Gita Infante (T) (777)
8.00 Animals in Uniform: The Defiance Animal Centre train two horses (3261)
8.30 The Vice of Dilexy Alice shocks Geraldine with a pre-wedding revelation, while the incontinent vice is pleasantly surprised by David's brother (T) (2306)
9.00 Nine O'Clock News (T) (5890)
9.30 Roger Roger, The Drivers are told to handle Dexter with kid-gloves following his wife's affair with an insurance salesman. Comedy, starring Keith Allen and Robert Davis (T) (557445)
10.20 Best Show in the World... Probably Taryn Wogan and Dominic Holland join Alan Davies and Fred Macaulay (T) (50355)
10.55 Question Time (T) (506229)
11.55 Faces of Islam: Businessman Sherif Ahmad talks about his guiding faith (T) (211445) WALES: 11.55 Snooker (489209) 12.00am Faces of Islam (3248678) 1.00 FILM: Stop at Nothing (541014) 2.35 News headlines and weather (5806675) 2.40 BBC News 24
12.15am Stop at Nothing (1989) Starring Veronica Hart and David Ackroyd. Drama about a professional child-stealer and a private detective respectively hired by parents locked in a bitter up-of-love due to win custody of their daughter. Directed by Chris Thompson (T) (153188)
1.45 Weather (5271830)
1.50 BBC News 24

BBC2
6.55am A Language for Movement (5161919) 7.00am Breakfast News (T) (2521209) 7.15 Teletubbies (2450280) 7.40 Help! It's the Hair Bear Bunch (5164321) 8.00 Blue Peter (T) (59754) 8.30 Mouse and Mole (229380) 8.35 Johnson and Friends (2225484) 8.40 The Rector (4857358) 8.10 Hello Berlin (2653755) 9.25 Megamaths (5422445) 9.45 Come Out (5165735) 10.00 Teletubbies (24754) 10.30 Storyline (5325445) 10.45 The Experiment (4524754) 11.05 Space Ark (5897174) 11.15 Zee Zee (5871904) 11.35 English File (525822) 11.55 Lifeschool (493838) 12.00pm Showcase (745336)
12.30 Working Lunch (72715) 1.00 Joshua Jones (27254532) 1.10 The Travel Hour: Madrid (5575071)
2.10 Tennis: Australian Open (58558025) WALES: 2.40 News (T) (505174) 2.45 Westminster (7292039) 3.25 News (T) (5481133) 3.30 The Village (200) WALES: 3.30-4.00 Snooker 4.00 Through the Keyhole (4557629) 4.25 Ready Steady Cook (4560718) 4.55 Esther (5259029) 5.30 Today's the Day (250) 6.00 Star Trek: Deep Space Nine (T) (587485) 6.45 Hit, Miss or Maybe (7194)
7.00 Third Rock from the Sun Tommy investigates more eccentricities of Earthly behaviour at school (T) (5483)
7.30 First Sight: Killing Me Sotly A look at both sides of the argument about voluntary euthanasia (525) WALES: Rey Meers' World of Survival
8.00 Ray Meers' World of Survival Siberia (T) (1903) WALES: Fine Families
8.30 Jeremy Clarkson's Extreme Machines The F-15 fighter-plane; an amphibious and combine harvester (T) (4906)
9.00 Meet the Ancestress The archaeologist Janet Richards investigates a stone coffin found on a building site in Bristol (T) (2272)
9.30 Louise Thoreau's World Weekends: Allen visitations to America's south west (555067)
10.20 Dance for the Camera: The Reunion, an exploration of the emotional turmoil experienced as a former couple attempt to get reacquainted. Directed by Lynne Seymour and Donald Macleod (188280)
10.30 Newsnight (T) (177667) 11.15 Late Review (544494) 11.55 Slide Forecast (471990) 12.00 The Midnight Hour (58558)
12.30am Learning Zone: Keith Hilbert (35556) 1.00 The 1997 Election (17507) 1.30 Rousseau in Africa (19255) 2.00 Kenneth Branagh's Hamlet (12245) 3.00 Surface World: Spanish (46978) 5.00 Classroom practice using (T) (39033) 5.30 Teaching Unit (552762) 5.45 National Identity

HTV
6.00am GMTV (5791657)
9.25am Win, Lose or Draw (T) (5488919)
9.55 Regional News (5839716)
10.00 The Time, the Place (T) (11280)
10.30 This Morning (T) (5010822)
12.30pm Regional News (7532822)
1.30 News (T) and weather (7102080)
12.55 Shortland Street (7322071) 1.25 Home and Away (T) (7100613) 1.50 Crossroads (3871935) 2.00 Quins (T) (7892420) 2.30 Vanessa: I'm Too Popular (T) (385522)
3.20 News (T) (3486648)
3.25 Regional News (3485819)
3.30 Potamus Park (5744483) 3.40 Wizards (5615915) 3.50 Cartoon Time (5578735) 3.55 The Forgotten Toys (5681342) 4.10 Blazing Dragons (T) (5759008) 4.20 Mike and Angelo (T) (5552174) 4.45 Sharp Practice (T) (27364)
5.10 A Country Practice (7855025)
5.40 News (T) and weather (513580)
6.00 Home and Away (T) (T) (523629)
6.25 Regional Weather (564025)
6.30 Regional News (T) (241)
7.00 Emmerdale Sarah isn't ready to give Jack what he wants (T) (9209)
7.30 News: Masterclass (483)
8.00 The Bill A life-or-death situation for Skene and Proctor when an assassin comes looking for his money (T) (5625)
8.30 Blues and Two Documentary series about the emergency services follow paramedics as they rush a seriously injured girl to hospital and her road to recovery (T) (7464)
9.00 The Truth About Women: Love and Sex Tracy Ullman, Zoe Ball, Jane Horrocks, Lynn Redgrave, Sophie Dahl, Denise Van Outen, Fiona Fullerton and Maureen Lipman, and others talk about how to meet a man and keep him (T) (5511)
10.00 News at Ten (T) and weather (57396)
10.30 London Tonight (T) (20057)
10.40 Faith Attraction (1957) Michael Douglas has an affair with Glenn Close while his wife is away. But his one-night stand will just not go away. Spoofy thriller about the dangers of playing away from home, that sparked controversy on its release. Directed by Adrian Lyne (T) (5078358)
12.30am The Jerry Springer Show (T) (78558)
1.40 New York News (5740633)
2.35 Bankers (T) (T) (571481)
3.35 The Chart Show (T) (T) (774656)
4.25 Phenomena (5511025)
4.35 The Time, the Place (T) (T) (56526)
5.00 TV Nightscreen (33859)
5.30 News (52439)

CENTRAL
As HTV West except:
12.55pm-1.25 A Country Practice (7322071)
5.10-5.40 Shortland Street (7855025)
6.25 Central News (531648)
6.55-7.00 Lifeline (577735)
1.40pm Not Fade Away (5023491)
2.40 Box Office America (545491)
3.10 War of the Worlds: Suzanne's visit to the war turns into a fight for her life when she discovers that aliens have taken over her mother's farm (538504)
4.00 The Body: A User's Guide (4100601)
4.25 Central Jobfinder '98 (5554472)
5.20 Asian Eye (1355526)
As HTV West except:
12.20pm-12.30 Illuminations (7532822)
12.55 Home and Away (7322071)
1.25-1.50 Emmerdale (7100613)
1.50-4.00 Home and Away (7555025)
6.00-7.00 Westcountry Live (77251)
As HTV West except:
5.10-5.40 Home and Away (7555025)
6.00 Meridian Tonight (519)
6.30-7.00 Getaways (241)
5.00am Newsround (33859)
As HTV West except:
12.55pm-1.25 What's My Line? (7322071)
5.10-5.40 Shortland Street (7855025)
6.25 Anglia Weather (565574)
6.25 Anglia News (531648)
6.55-7.00 What's On (577735)
10.25 Anglia Air Watch (457209)
Starts: 7.00am The Big Breakfast (54483)
9.00am Valley (58716)
11.30 Powerhouse (5133)
12.00 Rick Lake (54209)
12.30pm Sesame Street (54984)
1.00 Slot Meltdown (51342)
1.30 Film: The Defiant Ones (1955, b/w). An award-winning drama about racial intolerance and segregation. Tony Curtis is a bigoted white racist on the run from prison chained to a black fellow convict (Sidney Poitier). Directed by Stanley Kramer (5452193)
3.15 Contact High (5871919)
3.30 Collectors' Lot (377)
4.00 Fifteen-to-One (584)
4.30 Countdown (386)
5.00 5 Pump (7067)
5.30 World Britain (548)
6.00 Newyddion (387903)
6.10 Heno (58067)
7.00 Pobol y Cwm (587919)
7.25 Penrhwyd Hafod (248933)
8.00 Cwr Wyl (5071)
8.30 Newyddion (5008)
9.00 1 dot (5813)
10.00 Film: A Bridge Too Far (1977). A Second World War drama about the Allied doomed Arnhem operation. A star-studded cast includes Dirk Bogarde, Sean Connery, Robert Redford, Laurence Olivier and Anthony Hopkins. Directed by Richard Attenborough (23214205)
1.15am-2.00am Dispatches (1345965)

CHANNEL 4
6.00am Sesame Street (58071) 7.00 The Big Breakfast (54483)
9.00 schools: History in Action (5438006) 9.20 Geographical Eye Over Britain (T) (545432) 9.40 Understanding Northern Ireland (T) (1835385) 10.00 Middle English (T) (2484813) 10.15 Worlds of Faith (2570454) 10.30 Scientific Eye (T) (4420911) 10.50 The English Programme (4516735) 11.10 The German Programme (129532)
11.30 Powerhouse (5133) 12.00 Sesame Street (54209) 12.30pm Light Lunch (91006)
1.30 Deep Valley (1947, b/w) Melodrama with Ida Lupino, Dana Clagh and Wayne Morris. A farm girl finds her life changed when she encounters a runaway convict. Directed by Jean Negulesco (T) (81261)
3.30 Collectors' Lot (T) (377) 4.00 Fifteen-to-One (T) (584) 4.30 Countdown (T) (5454241) 4.55 Rick Lake (T) (3243193) 5.30 Pat Reuse (T) (548)
6.00 Newsround: Jackie's new boyfriend does not read with the approval of her sister (T) (261)
6.30 Hollyoaks: Jude wonders how much more she can take of Carol's power trip (T) (813)
7.00 Channel 4 News (T) (438087)
7.55 Things to Come: The writer David Aaronovich looks to the future (508990)
8.00 Mrs. Cohen's Manners: Mortgages. Bernice Cohen explains whether lenders take advantage of the lack of mortgage legislation to overcharge customers (T) (3071)
8.30 Bloom: Orchids (1/5) Anne Swinburn and Bill Chudziak look at the family of flowers surrounded by myth (T) (5006)
9.00 Dispatches: Why the public is still at risk from deadly E.coli food poisoning (T) (522358)
9.45 Foundations: Death and the Mother: A mother travels to the ends of the Earth to argue with Death for the return of her child (T) (78384)
10.00 Jake's Progress: Jake takes umbrage at the arrival of the baby. Drama written by Alan Bleasdale and starring Robert Lindsay and Julie Walters (T) (T) (782209)
12.05am Shooting Gallery Introduction: The Pinpoint (5519174) 12.00 The First Day (1150588) 12.35 Shark (3244323) 12.50 Fate (3221472) 1.10 Last (7402188) 1.30 Rooftop (1853410) 1.40 Trunk (1858694) 1.50 Lovely (5833323) 2.10 David London (5832014) 2.35 The Crash (5445929) 2.55 Crackerjack (5457439) 3.10 The Beat (3345057)
3.25 Sweeney (T) (5844675) 3.35 Daddy and the Muscle Factory (T) (5820781) 4.35 EZ Streets (5033168) 5.25 Those British Faces: Witold Hyde White (5376948)

CHANNEL 5
CHANNEL 5 ON SATELLITE Channel 5 is now broadcasting on transponder No 53 on the Astra Satellite. Viewers with a Videocrypt decoder will be able to receive the channel free of charge. Frequencies for transponder No 53 are: 10.82875 GHz; sound: 7.02 and 7.20 MHz
6.00am 5 News Early (3230498)
7.00 Exclusive (T) (5836313) 7.30 Mikhaleh (7719548) 7.35 Adventures of the Bush Patrol (1015433) 8.00 Hazevazoo (T) (548342) 8.30 WideWorld (T) (7547613)
9.00 Espresso (574358) 9.55 The Hot Zone (T) (7789159) 10.30 Sunset Beach (T) (1273491) 11.10 Lesza (58087)
12.00 5 News (T) (7821629) 12.30pm Family Affairs (T) (583177) 1.00 The Bold and the Beautiful (T) (5892984) 1.30 HouseBusters (T) (7031218) 2.00 5's Company (5855803)
3.30 The Command (1954) Western with Guy Madison, Joan Weldon and James Whitmore. An inexperienced doctor takes command of a cavalry troop travelling through dangerous Indian territory. Directed by David Butler (485913)
5.20 Russell Grant's Postcards: Russell Grant cruises down the River Thames (7785358)
5.30 A Date with Robin Williams (5408222)
6.00 100 Per Cent Game show without a host (5847735)
6.30 Family Affairs: Jack and Elsa squabble (T) (5838087)
7.00 5 News (T) (5411484)
7.30 The Hot Zone Documentary about the Hell's Gate National Park, which lies in the Great Rift Valley and offers spectacular scenery and wildlife (T) (5554071)
8.00 Was It Good for You? Ales Greenhalgh and John Leslie travel to Jamaica to meet three sets of holidaymakers (584484)
8.30 Tracey Takes On... Royalty: Tracey Ullman, Britain's first female stand-up comedian, looks at the lives of the royal family through a variety of characters and their ideas on the subject of royalty. With Alfred Molina (T) (5415919)
9.00 Original Sin (1989) with Charlton Heston, Ann Jillian and Robert Desiderio. When a young boy is kidnapped his parents are devastated. Disenchanted with the police's attitude the father seeks the help of his Mafia relatives to save his child. Directed by Ron Satoff (5773735)
10.50 The Dick Datchery Show: Chat and comedy (7886754)
11.35 Live and Dangerous Sports magazine including football action from Argentina and Brazil (7157629)
4.40 am Prisoner: Cell Block H (1745236)
5.30 100 Per Cent (T) (5922148)

SKY 1
7.00am Street Strips (58159) 7.30 The Simpsons (58700) 8.00 The Night (587055) 8.15 On Air (585259) 9.00 Home and Away (58701) 10.00 Another World (51944) 11.00 The Day After Tomorrow (58701) 12.00 The Day After Tomorrow (58701) 1.00 The Day After Tomorrow (58701) 2.00 The Day After Tomorrow (58701) 3.00 The Day After Tomorrow (58701) 4.00 The Day After Tomorrow (58701) 5.00 The Day After Tomorrow (58701) 6.00 The Day After Tomorrow (58701) 7.00 The Day After Tomorrow (58701) 8.00 The Day After Tomorrow (58701) 9.00 The Day After Tomorrow (58701) 10.00 The Day After Tomorrow (58701) 11.00 The Day After Tomorrow (58701) 12.00 The Day After Tomorrow (58701) 1.00 The Day After Tomorrow (58701) 2.00 The Day After Tomorrow (58701) 3.00 The Day After Tomorrow (58701) 4.00 The Day After Tomorrow (58701) 5.00 The Day After Tomorrow (58701) 6.00 The Day After Tomorrow (58701) 7.00 The Day After Tomorrow (58701) 8.00 The Day After Tomorrow (58701) 9.00 The Day After Tomorrow (58701) 10.00 The Day After Tomorrow (58701) 11.00 The Day After Tomorrow (58701) 12.00 The Day After Tomorrow (58701) 1.00 The Day After Tomorrow (58701) 2.00 The Day After Tomorrow (58701) 3.00 The Day After Tomorrow (58701) 4.00 The Day After Tomorrow (58701) 5.00 The Day After Tomorrow (58701) 6.00 The Day After Tomorrow (58701) 7.00 The Day After Tomorrow (58701) 8.00 The Day After Tomorrow (58701) 9.00 The Day After Tomorrow (58701) 10.00 The Day After Tomorrow (58701) 11.00 The Day After Tomorrow (58701) 12.00 The Day After Tomorrow (58701) 1.00 The Day After Tomorrow (58701) 2.00 The Day After Tomorrow (58701) 3.00 The Day After Tomorrow (58701) 4.00 The Day After Tomorrow (58701) 5.00 The Day After Tomorrow (58701) 6.00 The Day After Tomorrow (58701) 7.00 The Day After Tomorrow (58701) 8.00 The Day After Tomorrow (58701) 9.00 The Day After Tomorrow (58701) 10.00 The Day After Tomorrow (58701) 11.00 The Day After Tomorrow (58701) 12.00 The Day After Tomorrow (58701) 1.00 The Day After Tomorrow (58701) 2.00 The Day After Tomorrow (58701) 3.00 The Day After Tomorrow (58701) 4.00 The Day After Tomorrow (58701) 5.00 The Day After Tomorrow (58701) 6.00 The Day After Tomorrow (58701) 7.00 The Day After Tomorrow (58701) 8.00 The Day After Tomorrow (58701) 9.00 The Day After Tomorrow (58701) 10.00 The Day After Tomorrow (58701) 11.00 The Day After Tomorrow (58701) 12.00 The Day After Tomorrow (58701) 1.00 The Day After Tomorrow (58701) 2.00 The Day After Tomorrow (58701) 3.00 The Day After Tomorrow (58701) 4.00 The Day After Tomorrow (58701) 5.00 The Day After Tomorrow (58701) 6.00 The Day After Tomorrow (58701) 7.00 The Day After Tomorrow (58701) 8.00 The Day After Tomorrow (58701) 9.00 The Day After Tomorrow (58701) 10.00 The Day After Tomorrow (58701) 11.00 The Day After Tomorrow (58701) 12.00 The Day After Tomorrow (58701) 1.00 The Day After Tomorrow (58701) 2.00 The Day After Tomorrow (58701) 3.00 The Day After Tomorrow (58701) 4.00 The Day After Tomorrow (58701) 5.00 The Day After Tomorrow (58701) 6.00 The Day After Tomorrow (58701) 7.00 The Day After Tomorrow (58701) 8.00 The Day After Tomorrow (58701) 9.00 The Day After Tomorrow (58701) 10.00 The Day After Tomorrow (58701) 11.00 The Day After Tomorrow (58701) 12.00 The Day After Tomorrow (58701) 1.00 The Day After Tomorrow (58701) 2.00 The Day After Tomorrow (58701) 3.00 The Day After Tomorrow (58701) 4.00 The Day After Tomorrow (58701) 5.00 The Day After Tomorrow (58701) 6.00 The Day After Tomorrow (58701) 7.00 The Day After Tomorrow (58701) 8.00 The Day After Tomorrow (58701) 9.00 The Day After Tomorrow (58701) 10.00 The Day After Tomorrow (58701) 11.00 The Day After Tomorrow (58701) 12.00 The Day After Tomorrow (58701) 1.00 The Day After



